



Il Shim Leader Packet

One Heart, One Mind

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Hey there and welcome to the Il Shim Team!

Let me start by saying a big THANK YOU for taking time out of your busy life and other commitments to invest in your younger brothers and sisters over the next 10 weeks! You are making a big impact on the experience of the Il Shim participants this year. I promise you won't regret it! Il Shim is our faith's coming of age tradition and that's what you'll be helping these youth do: come of age! The team who put together this curriculum has tried very hard to make it relevant, personal, and meaningful for young Unificationists. I hope that you find this curriculum is just that and much much more for you and your group of youth.

There is something so remarkable about having a group of youth whom you are working closely with for several weeks. A special closeness is formed because of the level of content and regularity of meeting. I remember my first time leading Il Shim as a young Youth Pastor. I found that the more I invested my heart and soul in my group of girls, the deeper my personal experience became. I was surprised how much I enjoyed my time as a Il Shim team member. By the time graduation came around I remember feeling like my group of girls were really my little sisters.

These youth are entering an important stage of adolescence, which is the transition between childhood and adulthood. Erik Erikson, a well-known psychologist, has cited this time period as an important time of identity formation which means they are trying to answer the question, "Who am I?" This important quest coupled with a ton of physical and emotional changes mean that these youth are going through a lot. It's important to keep this in mind while you work closely with them.

You are taking part of a very important and formative experience for your Il Shim participants. It's a once in a lifetime opportunity to be a part of building a foundation for their development. They will remember this experience forever. If they choose to raise their children in our faith they will tell their children about their Il Shim leaders. And that means they will be telling their children about you!

That may sound like a lot of pressure, but don't worry! You are going to do GREAT! The fact that you have volunteered your time means God is ready to work through you. Here are a few tips that may help you be even more successful:

- Let God work. Before each session take a few minutes to prepare yourself spiritually so that Heavenly Parent can truly work through you and guide sessions as needed.
- Come prepared to sessions. Take time the night before to review what you are teaching so that you are ready to be a great facilitator.
- Do the readings and homework yourself. The best leader is the best participant. Model the behavior you want to see in your youth by doing the work yourself. You will find a greater ability to relate to their experience as a result.
- Communicate with Parents. Let them know how sessions are going and encourage them to continue their participation at home. They are what makes or breaks a participant's experience during Il Shim!

- Use small groups. Small groups are the greatest way to make an impact in the lives of these young people. If you have a large group try to split them into groups of no larger than 10 to facilitate this program. You may also want to consider how you are splitting them up such as by gender, by age, etc.
- Make it personal for you and for them. Get to know these youth on a personal level and let them get to know you. Allowing this to happen will also allow for more sincere investment in the program from your group!

Once again, thank you so much for being a part of this experience. I'm confident that you and your youth will have a fantastic and transformative time together. If you ever need more help please use our Youth Ministry website as a resource: ym.familyfed.org.

God bless you and your youth!

Sincerely,

Kaeleigh Moffitt
National Youth Ministry Coordinator

Session 1: All About Il Shim!

Supplies for this session: *Il Shim packets, Find Someone Who sheet, notebooks, pens, decorative supplies for notebooks, Il Shim photos and testimony (in Drive), colored post-it notes, soft reflective music.*

Optional: *laptop or some type of projector.*

1. Introduce the Il Shim Staff (5 minutes)
2. You are going to be spending the next 10 weeks with these incredible youth and here's your chance to make a great first impression. Keep introductions simple and fun and remember that the more outgoing you are, the more comfortable the youth you are working with will be.

Here are some points to consider when introducing yourself:

- Your name and age
 - What you are doing in your life right now (school, work, matching/blessing, etc.)
 - What you remember about your experience in Il Shim
 - Why you wanted to help with Il Shim this year
 - Remember that the parents are entrusting their children with you. Think before sharing any time during this program!
2. Play an Icebreaker: (15 minutes)
 3. All new groups of people need to break the ice and fun is the perfect way to do that. First, have everyone introduce their names and ages to the group. Then, lead them through the Find Someone Who activity.

Find Someone Who activity:

- Hand out the *Find Someone Who* sheet.
 - Say, *"We're going to walk around and get to know each other a bit! Read each statement on the sheet, and then find someone who fits that statement. Say hello and give your name. Ask them their name, and if they fit a statement, write their name down in the box. Your goal is to get your paper filled, but you can only repeat someone's name twice!"*
 - Give time for them to walk around. You are free to join in as well. When you see they are almost finished, give a one-minute warning.
 - Go over each statement, and tell people who fit the statement to raise their hand (*example: "Raise your hand if you can braid hair."*)
 - **Option:** If you have only a couple of participants in the program, you can read aloud each one and answer them together.
3. Introduction of Il Shim

- Introduce the program with the provided photos, videos, and testimonies (will be uploaded to Google Drive in the near future).
4. Il Shim Session Reading (10 minutes)
- Read through the "Session 1" Reading aloud. Speak clearly. Call on students to read different paragraphs.
 - Stop at the end of each section to discuss the main points. The Section Recap is there for you (not in the Youth packet) to guide you in summarizing if needed.
4. Discussion (10 minutes)
- Share the answer to the following question in a large group. Below are different options for you to hold this discussion.

"What aspect of the Il Shim Program are you most interested in and why?"

- **Option A:** Sit in a circle (or two circles depending on how large your group is. Don't have more than 8 in a group). Discuss "Popcorn" style – one person starts, then they pick someone else to answer, who picks someone else, and so on, until everyone has answered.
- **Option B:** If you have a laptop, or even better – a projector, you can try this tech-savvy way to collect their responses all at once! They will text their responses to the site, which will pop up on the screen. This allows them to feel more comfortable since answers are anonymous. Follow the steps below:
 1. Go to www.polleverywhere.com and login using:
 - Username: yayam@ familyfed.org
 - Password: yayam2020
 2. Once logged in, click the poll with the question: *"What aspect of the Il Shim Program are you most interested in and why?"*
 3. When the poll shows on the screen, make sure that the **Active** button is clicked.
 4. Tell students to follow the texting directions at the top to join the poll. Then, they can type their answer.
 7. If someone does not have a phone, they can use someone else's when finished.
 8. After answers pop up on the screen, you can read aloud the different responses you received!
 9. Below is an **example** of what responses will look like ()



2. Personalize Il Shim Journals (10 minutes)

- Hand out journals to all of the youth and take some time to personalize or decorate the journals.
- The idea is that by personalizing their notebooks they will be more invested in the use of it through Il Shim.
- Try to choose decorative options that would intrigue your group of youth. Perhaps even consider printing out some photos of them to put on the front of their journal.
- You can laminate the outside of their journals by using contact paper on top of their creations.

3. Personal Reflection (7 minutes)

4. Allow some quiet time for the youth to write and/or think about these questions in their Il Shim notebooks. Feel free to play some quiet and reflective music (you can Youtube *acoustic guitar* or *piano*) in the background.

- What is your relationship with God like right now?
- What is your understanding of the Unificationist faith?
- What is your relationship like with your parents right now?
- In what ways are you involved in our church community right now?

4. Activity: Goal Setting (10 minutes)

- Now that the youth have had time to reflect on some things they would like to work on during their time in Il Shim, ask them to come up with a written goal for each of the following areas:
 - Relationship with God
 - Understanding of our Faith
 - Relationship with your Parents
 - Involvement in the Church
 - Hand out 4 post-it notes per person and have them write each of their goals on them. Then, have them stick them to the inside of their Il Shim Notebook as a reminder of what they are hoping to achieve during Il Shim.
 - Encourage them to keep these goals in mind each week.
5. This Week's Homework: (5 minutes)
- Go over the packet with your parents
 - Write down any questions you have
6. Closing Prayer (3 minutes)
- Offer a closing prayer and invite God to be part of the participants' journey through Il Shim.

Session 1 Reading: All About Il Shim!

Introduction

Hello and welcome to the Il Shim Program! We are so excited for you to take part in this incredible journey over the next 10 weeks! This program is designed for YOU and we hope that you will find it valuable and meaningful in deepening your faith in God, understanding who True Parents are in the Unificationist movement, growing your relationship with your parents, and finding ways to get involved that inspire you.

As a young adult in today's world, you may find it challenging to understand the Unification faith and how it can fit into your life. That's normal! This time of your life should be about making your faith something unique and personal to you. This is a time for you to figure out what you believe, why you believe it, and what you are going to do about it. We hope that the Il Shim program serves as a foundation for you to do just that.

How It All Started

The Il Shim program was first created to encourage a purity-based lifestyle for the young people of the Unificationist faith as they prepare to receive the Marriage Blessing. The Marriage Blessing is a significant part of the faith, which provides the unique opportunity for engaged, or already married couples to dedicate their marriage to God, commit their lives to their one and only spouse, and together, work to build a God-centered family that was meant to be created before the Biblical Fall. Today, Il Shim has evolved into a rite of passage that encourages young Unificationists to take responsibility over their ever-growing faith journey as well as provides knowledge of the Unificationist traditions and values.

"*Il Shim*" is a Korean term that translates to "*One Heart*" or "*One Heart and Mind*." This term, brought into light by Reverend Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, who we call True Parents, and who are the founders of our faith, inspired the start of the program, which motivates young people in the Unificationist faith to be one in heart and mind with God, our Heavenly Parent. Rev. and Mrs. Moon began and officiate the Marriage Blessing Ceremonies for new and married couples around the world teaching a God-centered family as the cornerstone of a peaceful world. The Il Shim program provides a 10-session curriculum that teaches and supports the efforts of young Unificationists to grow in both knowledge and practice of their faith and begin to build their own unique relationship with God and True Parents, working towards the goal of becoming and building a new generation of peace.

// Section Recap: Il Shim is a rite of passage, a coming of age, which shows young people that during this time in their lives, they should begin to explore their faith, build a unique

relationship with God and True Parents, and keep a purity-based lifestyle while preparing for the marriage Blessing.

Purpose of Il Shim

In keeping with the spirit of this original ceremony, we have adopted the Il Shim program and ceremony for the purpose of supporting young Unificationists in taking ownership over their faith, relationships, and life.

We hope that the Il Shim program will help you in these four areas of your life:

- Growing your Life of Faith by supporting you in creating a unique relationship with God and discovering tools to support that relationship.
- Deepening your Understanding of Unificationist Traditions by providing the resources for you to discover the value and significance of aspects of our faith, such as True Parents, abstinence before marriage, the marriage Blessing, and living for the sake of others.
- Developing your Relationship with your Parents by encouraging opportunities to create healthy conversations with your parents through open communication and deepening trust.
- Discovering Ways to Get Involved by connecting you to the people who can help you find ways of serving and getting involved in your local community that are inspiring to you.

// Section Recap: These four areas are what we will be targeting during this program: growing your faith and making it your own, learning about our traditions, opening communication and getting closer to your parents, and learning how to plug into your community.

Why Choose Il Shim?

Each major faith has a significant ceremony that recognizes and promotes the inheritance of their faith traditions by their youth, such as the Catholic Confirmation ceremony and the Jewish Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The Il Shim Ceremony is quite similar to these, as it is meant to be a way to recognize your maturity and the growing responsibility you are taking in your life. This program is just the starting point for you to truly take ownership over your faith, your relationships, and your surrounding community.

Throughout the Il Shim program, you and your parents will complete many conditions of faith and will also study the tenants of our faith. We hope that through your study, you will find that our Unificationist faith is something truly valuable and worth committing to. The graduation ceremony is meant to highlight this incredible investment you and your family will make as well as recognize your commitment to continuing your path of spiritual growth. The ceremony is an opportunity for you to make a new

beginning and a new commitment in front of God, our True Parents, and your own family and community.

Please read through the requirements and schedule of the next 10 weeks so you will be prepared. You should also take a look at the Il Shim Pledge so you know what you will be pledging before God, True Parents, your parents, and your community:

IL SHIM PLEDGE

1. *I promise to make sincere effort to develop my relationship with God and my life of faith through prayer and through my lifestyle.*
2. *I will strive to inherit the Unificationist traditions of honoring True Parents, upholding the value of the Blessing by maintaining my sexual purity until the Blessing, and living for the sake of others.*
3. *I commit to the process of growing and deepening my relationship with my parents by practicing healthy and open communication.*
4. *I will endeavor to find ways to serve my local church community and wider society with my unique passions and talents.*

Also know that God, your Heavenly Parent, is eager to build a relationship with you! God is so excited to be able to deepen your relationship together throughout the course of this program. Your parents are also equally excited to deepen their relationship with you. The involvement of your parents is an essential component of this program! Don't miss out on these opportunities to hear their stories, inherit their life of faith, and get to know them in a new way!

We sincerely hope and pray that as you continue your involvement in the Il Shim Program, you will discover God's deep and boundless love for you as well as the value of the traditions our True Parents have laid out for us all. We pray that you will come to know how incredibly valuable you are and that you have very special role to play in our world!

// Section Recap: Similar to other faiths, Unificationists have a ceremony to mark the point of spiritual maturity. This program will provide the tools necessary for you to begin the journey of making your faith your own. The Il Shim Pledge targets the four main areas of the program.

All About Il Shim for Parents

Supplies for this session: Il Shim Packets, Pens, paper pads, computer/screen to show powerpoints/photos/videos, copies of articles for parent and child communication

1. Opening Song (3 minutes)

Start the session with a holy song to prepare a holy environment.

2. Opening prayer (2 minutes)

Have an Il Shim Staff member offer an opening prayer to invite God's presence into the session.

3. Introduce the Il Shim Staff (5 minutes)

4. While you have the honor of spending the next 10 weeks with the children of these parents, it's important to remember that these parents spend much more time with their children than you do and will thus have much more of an impact on their experience in Il Shim. The role of Il Shim staff in this program is like a teacher; you may teach many great things during the sessions and workshops; however, the real work happens at home with the follow up and habit formation. When introducing yourself, it's important to make this point clear and focus on supporting the development of the parent and child relationship.

Here are some points to consider when introducing yourself:

- Your Name
 - What you are doing in your life right now (school, work, matching/blessing, etc.)
 - Remember that the parents are entrusting their children with you.
 - Why you decided to be an Il Shim leader
- ### **5. Presentation of past Il Shim programs (5 minutes)**
- Share photos, videos, and/or testimonies from prior participants and staff who have completed the Il Shim program (will be uploaded into Google Drive in the near future).
 - This will help parents understand the value of the program and what the end goal will be.
- ### **6. Read the Introductory Letter (10 minutes)**
- Read through the first session "Introductory Letter."
 - Make sure to read it out loud and to pause between paragraphs to summarize or clarify points
 - Take turns reading paragraphs among the parents
- ### **7. Go Over the General and Home Study Packet (10 minutes)**
- Home Study Packet:

- Explain: Your packet supplements the in-class study topics. The questions and assignments after each study topic should be completed together as parents and children.
- Perform a short role-play scenario in which a "parent" and "child" do the homework questions together. This is an important opportunity to model how to create a safe and open environment for youth to talk to their parents.
 - Use the question "Who is God to you?" to demonstrate an effective communication between a parent and child about this topic.
- Program Requirements:
 - Youth must attend all 9 in-class sessions (which includes a 2-day retreat) as well as the graduation ceremony.
 - They are allowed to miss up to 2 in class sessions as long as an instructor can provide a makeup session. If a participant needs to miss more than 2 in class sessions, they will be asked to sign up for Il Shim next year instead.
 - All homework must be completed with parents on a weekly basis.

8. **Understanding Your Teen (10 minutes)**

This part of the session is an opportunity to set the stage for the many changes and pressures these teens are going through. As you go through some of these topics, it might be a good idea to have a parent advisor present to help address some of these concerns.

- Social Impact of Adolescence:
 - Teens are transitioning from childhood to adulthood.
 - In this period, teens struggle between their need to stand out, and their need to belong.
 - They have a strong desire to belong to a group, but also don't want to be defined by expectations of others.
 - They may experiment with different roles and personas in an attempt to discover their true identity.
- The Internet and Social Media:
 - Teens in this day and age have grown up with access to the internet from a very young age.
 - Most teens in middle school are on one of the following social media websites and social apps (you may want to explain what these websites are in parents don't know):
 - Facebook
 - Instagram
 - Twitter
 - Snapchat
 - YouTube
 - Vine

- Even without meaning to, teens of this generation are exposed to online pornography. These images and experiences are deeply ingrained and impact their perception of love, intimacy, sex, and the Blessing.
- Here are some statistics to mention, you can easily look up more recent statistics on these issues if you like:
 - 47% of high school students in the U.S. have had sexual intercourse (www.statista.com/topics/1063/teenagers/)
 - 20.1% of high school students in the U.S. were bullied (www.statista.com/topics/1063/teenagers/)
 - In 2010, the average teenager sends 3,339 texts per month. This number is increasing (www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2010/u-s-teen-mobile-report-calling-yesterday-texting-today-using-apps-tomorrow.html)
 - 93% of boys and 62% of girls are exposed to Internet porn before the age of 18. (www.covenanteyes.com/2010/08/19/teens-and-porn-10-stats-your-need-to-know/)
 - Today's teens spend more than 7.5 hours a day consuming media: T.V., music, surfing the web, social media, video games, etc. (www.washingtonpost.com/postlive/teens-are-spending-more-time-consuming-media-on-mobile-devices/2013/03/12/309bb242-8689-11e2-98a3-b3db6b9ac586_story.html)
- What can we do about it?
 - Reverend Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, who we call True Parents, and who are the founders of our faith, have taught us the incredible value of the family as the school of love. This is meant to be a place where we learn how to have healthy relationships.
 - The most important thing we can do is build an open and honest relationship with our children.
 - Even though it may be difficult, we need to have the challenging discussions with our children. Otherwise, they will learn about the most important areas of life from the internet or their friends.
 - We hope that Il Shim serves as a foundation to build this type of relationship so that you and your child can continue communicating into their adulthood.

9. Communication with Teenagers (15 minutes)

Separate the parents into small groups and discuss these three points. Ask one person from each group to take notes and report to the larger group at the conclusion of the discussion.

- How do you open up to your child and how does he/she open up to you?
- How do you talk to your child about sexuality?
- How do you help your child develop a relationship with God?
- Reference Parent Articles that are located in the Parent Packet. These have some helpful tips for communicating with teens.

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10. Answer Questions and Hand Out Articles

- Answer any questions the parents may have regarding Il Shim and the requirements.

11. Closing prayer

- Ask a parent to offer a closing prayer for the session.

Parents Introductory Letter

Introduction

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As a young adult in today's world, your child may find it challenging to understand the Unification faith and how it can fit into his/her life. That's normal! This time of a teen's life should be about making his/her faith something unique and personal. This is a time for teens to figure out what they believe, why they believe it, and what they are going to do about it. We hope that the Il Shim program serves as a foundation for your child to do just that.

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Each major faith has a significant ceremony that recognizes and promotes the inheritance of their faith traditions by their youth, such as the Catholic Confirmation ceremony and the Jewish Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The Il Shim Ceremony is quite similar to these, as it is meant to be a way to recognize your child's maturity and the growing responsibility he/she is taking in his/her life. This program is just the starting point for them to truly take ownership over their faith, their relationships, and their surrounding community.

Throughout the Il Shim program, you and your child will complete many conditions of faith and will also study the tenants of our faith. We hope that through their study, they will find that our Unificationist faith is something truly valuable and worth committing to. The graduation ceremony is meant to highlight this incredible investment you and your family will make as well as recognize your child's

commitment to continuing your path of spiritual growth. The ceremony is an opportunity for your child to make a new beginning and a new commitment in front of God, our True Parents, and their own family and community.

Please read through the requirements and schedule of the next 10 weeks so you will be prepared to support your child. You should also take a look at the Il Shim Pledge so you know what your child will be pledging before God, True Parents, you, and your community:

IL SHIM PLEDGE

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3. *I commit to the process of growing and deepening my relationship with my parents by practicing healthy and open communication.*
4. *I will endeavor to find ways to serve my local church community and wider society with my unique passions and talents.*

Each child will have a unique experience throughout the Il Shim Program. Some may take it more seriously than others, and that's okay. Il Shim is not meant to be a quick fix for any youth. It is simply a foundation and framework for you and your child to navigate through these very important topics at a level that is appropriate for them. Your child is just beginning a life journey of discovering who they are and what they believe in. While the Il Shim leaders are very important in this process, we want to stress the significance of parental/guardian involvement throughout the program. No one knows your child better than you and this program is meant to highlight your incredible investment. You are the main educators of this program at home, and we are here to support you!

We sincerely hope and pray that as you continue your involvement in the Il Shim Program, your family will become even closer together as you support your child and go through all the requirements of the program.

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Talking With Teens -- Tips for Better Communication

Parents and teens can bridge the communication gap with a little patience and a healthy measure of R-E-S-P-E-C-T. Here are 6 tips for parents and 6 for teenagers.

By: Neil Osterweil

A parent's view of speech development: it begins in infancy, blossoms in childhood, and stops dead in its tracks at adolescence. A teenager's view of speech development: "My parents don't understand a word I'm saying." You don't need a degree in communications to know that parents and teenagers seem to spend more time talking at and past one another than to or with one another. Chalk it up to different agendas, the stress of daily life, or familiarity breeding contempt. Whatever the reason, adolescents and their folks are as good at making conversation as the construction crew at the Tower of Babel.

But with a little give and take, a lot of patience, and a healthy measure of R-E-S-P-E-C-T, parents and teens may be able to remove the roadblocks hindering two-way communication.

To help understand talking with teens, WebMD interviewed two experts in adolescent development: Laurence Steinberg, PhD, Distinguished University Professor and Laura H. Carnell Professor of Psychology at Temple University in Philadelphia; and Carol Maxym, PhD, who counsels families in Honolulu and Washington, D.C.

Good to Know

First, says Steinberg, parents need to recognize that "although your child doesn't have the same level of knowledge, information, wisdom or experience as you do, he or she has essentially the same logical tools and can see through logical fallacies and lapses in what's sensible."

In other words, the "do-it-because-I-said-so" approach to talking with teens doesn't work anymore. "They can't be bullied around by power-assertive statements by parents that aren't based on any kind of logical reality," Steinberg says.

Teenagers have exquisitely sensitive [lie] detectors, agrees Maxym, who counsels families of troubled adolescents in private practice. "Parents need to be emotionally authentic. Don't try to act as though you are angry when you're really not. Don't try to tell your child 'I'm really hurt when you don't go to school,' when what you really are is angry. Kids know their parents really well and pick up on it, and as soon as you as a parent become inauthentic, you've lost any chance of real communication," says Maxym.

Research also shows that "the big barrier is in how parents and teenagers define issues," If the parent sees a teen's messy room as a moral issue, and the teen sees it as a matter of choice, they may never reach a mutually satisfactory solution, says Steinberg.

What can you do to communicate better? Our experts offer these tips both parents and teenagers:

For Parents

1. Don't lecture your teen, have a conversation. When parents complain "my teenager doesn't want to talk to me," what they're really complaining about is "my teenager doesn't want to listen to me." Conversation involves at least two people, Steinberg emphasizes.
2. Don't attack. "The conversation between any two people will break down if one of the two is put on the defensive and made to feel he's being accused of something," says Steinberg.
3. Show respect for your teen's opinions. Teenagers can be surprisingly easy to talk with if the parents make it clear that they're listening to the teen's point of view.
4. Keep it short and simple. Maxym urges parents to remember what she calls the "50% rule": "Almost every parent says at least 50% more than he or she should. Shut up. Remember when you were a teen and your parents lectured at you? And you thought, 'Will you please stop; I already got the point!' Stop before your teen gets there."
5. Be yourself. Don't try to talk like your kids or their friends. "You're an adult, so be an adult," Maxym says.
6. Seize the moment. A spontaneous conversation in the car or at home late at night -- any time when you're not rushed -- can make for some of the warmest, most rewarding moments, Steinberg says. "I think for parents, one of the key parts of having good communication with kids is being around enough to capitalize on these moments that invariably don't come up when you expect them to."

5 Secrets for Communicating with Teenagers

By: Debbie Pincus

Does this sound familiar? Your teenage son is taking forever in the bathroom (again), but you need him to get ready so you can get to work on time. You're thinking, "How could I have raised such an inconsiderate kid? He's so disrespectful!" Meanwhile, your child is locked in the bathroom, consumed with his image in the mirror. He's thinking, "No way am I going to school with this pimple on my nose." Outside in the hallway, you start pounding on the door, yelling at him to hurry up. He screams, "God, you just don't understand! Leave me alone!" When he finally emerges, he gives you the silent treatment. Not only that, he's missed the bus, so you have to drive him to school. You end up late for work and completely overwhelmed, wondering, "Why doesn't my kid listen to me? Does he have to fight me on everything?"

Distance and explosiveness are often the only ways your teen knows how to communicate when things get intense -- which of course only causes more conflict.

You and your teen: two different worlds, two different perspectives -- and a giant disconnect that can make communicating a real mystery. As a therapist and the mother of three teenagers myself, I know firsthand that the more you push your kids, the more they get defensive and dig in their heels; they become reactive in the form of explosiveness or shutting down. And they're thinking, "My parents don't have a clue, so what's the point of trying to explain myself? I'll just tune them out." Clamming up or exploding are both ways your teenagers attempt to manage their stress and defend themselves. That's because distance and explosiveness are often the only ways your teen knows how to communicate when things get intense -- which of course only causes more conflict.

Here are 5 secrets that I've found to be really helpful personally for communicating with kids through the difficult adolescent years.

1. The secret to opening your child's ears: Here's a simple secret that will help you in everything you do with your teen: No matter how hard it might be, try to start all interactions with your child with understanding, even if you don't fully agree or even quite comprehend what they're talking about. Here's an example: Your teenage daughter is not doing her schoolwork, and instead is online with friends chatting. It drives you crazy because you're thinking, "If she fails another test, her average will go down and she'll never get into college. What kind of future will she have?" Your teen, on the other hand is thinking, "I have to get online and talk with Skyler. If we don't make up after the fight we had in the hall today, all the other girls will be against me and I'll have no one to hang out with at school tomorrow." Again, two different worlds. Try to start by saying, "I understand how difficult it is for you when you have a fight with one of your friends. I also know that you need to pass this test tomorrow. Schoolwork is your job and it's your responsibility to do it to the best of your abilities. Let's sit down and think of a good way you can manage your time tonight." Be sure not to say "I understand, but..." which will simply disqualify what you've just said. Start from a place of understanding, and try to put yourself in

your child's shoes first before telling her what needs to change. I've found that doing this tends to "open kids' ears." Instead of feeling like they have to defend themselves against you, they actually listen.

2. Take the emotionality out of the equation. Emotion is your enemy when you're trying to get through to your teen. Remind yourself that what he says and does is not a reflection on you. You may not like how he's behaving -- or even how he's thinking -- but keep your emotions out of it, even if his behavior impacts you. I'm not saying this is an easy thing to do; it's tough, but it's a skill you can learn just like any other. In fact, I tell parents to repeat this slogan to themselves before talking to their kids: "This is just like a business transaction; it's nothing personal." When you really think about it, there's no reason to be mad at your child for being himself. He may be making a poor choice, but the truth is, he might not yet have the skill set to make a better one. So your job is to help guide him to better choices so he can in turn develop a better skill set. When you realize what your job is as a parent, it will help you be less emotional. When you feel frustrated, remember, don't take it personally. Tell yourself that this is simply a problem to solve, and part of "parenting business as usual."
3. Ask curious questions...not loaded questions. Ask your teen for his ideas and be collaborative. Let him see that you believe in him and that you're not mad at him for struggling in his life. When you let him see that you have faith in his abilities and he has the space to work things out on his own, you will begin to develop true confidence in him. Don't ask loaded questions that put your child on the defensive like, "Why can't you get up on time? What's wrong with you?" Instead, try opening a conversation with, "Eli, do you have any ideas for how you might get up on time?" If he says he doesn't know, offer a few of your own and ask which one would work for him. Let your teen know that his problems are his to solve. Don't step into his "box." Rather, you are there to help him figure out solutions -- and to let him deal with the natural consequences of his behavior.
4. Your goal is to help your child think for himself, which will in turn help him feel like he has some control over his world. Listen openly to what he says and ask him to think critically about each choice. What will work and what will be problematic about each decision? What would be the natural consequences of each choice -- and how would he feel about dealing with that?
5. Don't be needy; stand on your own two feet. Don't "need" your teen's cooperation, validation, or good behavior. As soon as you need something from your child so that you can feel better, you have put yourself in a vulnerable position because he does not have to give it to you. When you need something and don't get it, you will naturally try harder by controlling and manipulating more. And your teen will become more and more defiant or passively compliant -- neither of which is good.
6. The truth is, you don't need anyone else to prop you up. You can validate yourself and solve your own problems. So if your child is acting out, that's his problem. Your problem is to decide how you will choose to behave toward him. That's in your hands, not his. Ask yourself, "How do I want to act, no matter how he is acting? What can I put up with and what can't I?" Take back your power and say to yourself, "If my child is screaming at me, instead of needing him to stop, I

can turn around and walk away and not engage." Let him know you won't talk with him until he can approach you with civility. Here's the truth: when you aren't trying to get your child to change or shape up, you will be able to think of better choices for yourself. And your child will be less defiant because he will have no one to resist. When you're not trying to control him and you're not reacting to him, he will have to wrestle with himself rather than with you.

7. Don't do anything until you're both calm. Another rule of thumb is to avoid doing anything until you and your child have both calmed down. The fact is, you don't have to respond to your child when you are upset, or when your child is upset and in your face. You just don't. You can say nothing. You can take a few minutes or more if you need to. When emotions have evened out, you can sit down and talk with him. It's never good to try to bring up a difficult subject or resolve a conflict in the heat of the moment. So if either you or your child is upset, pause and come back when you can address things in a calmer way.
8. If you attempt a conversation with your child and he's rude or out of line, that's when you have to hold on to yourself and make sure you don't get dragged into a fight. If your relationship with your child is such that it's impossible to have an open, respectful conversation at this point in time, remember that it's still your job to stay firmly planted. Have a slogan that you say to yourself like, "I'm not going there no matter what." If you can do that consistently, over time the baiting and antagonism should calm down. And don't feel badly if you get pulled back in occasionally -- staying strong isn't easy. The good news is that the more you refuse to engage, the easier it will get to stay calm.

Session 2: Your Heavenly Parent and You

Supplies for this session: Discussion questions postable sheets, tape, highlighters, chart paper, marker, post it notes, pens, (index cards and pens/pencils (optional)).

- **Welcome and Check In (5 minutes)**
 - Welcome everyone to their second session!
 - Introduce what the session will be about:
 - Who our Heavenly Parent is
 - Having a relationship with God
 - Taking ownership over your spiritual life
 - Share what they can gain from their investment into the session:
 - A deeper understanding of God
 - Ideas for how to build your relationship with God
 - Note: If you have members in your group that do *not* believe in God, you will need to be sensitive as you go through each section. Some youth with this belief will be fine just

following along, but if you have youth who are very adamant about their belief, you will need to modify the session to include them. You can focus the discussion questions and activity on being purpose-driven and improving your quality of life.

- **Play an Icebreaker (10 minutes)**

Choose one of the following icebreakers to get your students relaxed and ready!

- Tongue Twisters

- Have participants find a partner
- If there is an odd number staff should play too!
- Then tell them to say these tongue twisters a few times quickly:
 - Blue Balloon
 - Toy Boat
 - Irish Wristwatch
 - Unique New York*
 - Red leather, yellow leather
 - *(You may need to write the last two on the front board or on a piece of paper and tape it to the front of the room for people to see)*
 - The Sixth Sick Sheik's Sixth Sheep is Sick
 - One Smart Feller, he was Smart. Two Smart Fellers, they were Smart. Three Smart Fellers, all Felt Smart.

*You can get them to switch partners halfway through

- Index Card Towers

- Break into teams of 3-5, depending on how many participants you have.
- Give each team 20 index cards.
- Say, "You have ten minutes to create a free-standing tower with your index cards. However, before you add an index card to your tower, you must write down something your whole team has in common."
- Start 10 min on a timer and say, "Go!" Walk around to make sure teams are working together and collaborating well.
- Once the 10 min timer goes off, have someone from each team share one thing they had in common with their group.

- **Review Homework from Last Week (10 minutes)**

- Last week's homework was to go over the II Shim packet and write down any questions that the youth or parents may have. Spend a few minutes answering the questions from their homework and making sure everyone knows what the requirements of the II Shim program are.

- **Read the Session Reading (10 minutes)**

- Say, "We are going to read through the Session 2 Reading: Heavenly Parent and You. You are going to read in partners. Read one paragraph and then switch. When you get to the end of a section, highlight one or two sentences or thoughts from that section

that stood out to you. Share what you highlighted with your partner and why. Then, continue reading."

- *If you have an odd number of students, make one group of 3.*
- While students are reading, walk around and sit in with them. You can listen to them share their thoughts as well. When most are just about finished, announce that they must start wrapping up.
- When finished, gather back together.

- **Discussion: (15 minutes)**

- Have each of the following Discussion Question print outs taped on the wall in separate parts of the room. Split students into 3 groups and assign each group to a question. Have them stand next to the question.
 1. Which characteristics of God do you appreciate most?
 2. Where do you see God in the world?
 3. What practices do you think you could do to help you build a relationship with God?
- Say, "You will have five minutes to discuss the question with your group. Make sure each person has a chance to answer. When five minutes is up, I will say 'Switch', and you will go to your next question. So, if you are at question 1, you will go to 2. If you are at 2, you will go to 3, and if you are at 3, you will go to 1. Okay, begin!"
- Time every five minutes, and say, "Switch" when the time is up. As students are discussing, walk around to guide discussions.
- **Option:** If you do not have enough students to make this type of discussion work, you can sit in a circle and toss a soft ball, or anything really. The person you toss to must answer the question. Then, they can pass it onto someone else who hasn't answered yet. Do this style of discussion for each question.

- **Activity: Invitation for God (10 minutes)**

- Before showing the video below, first say, "We're going to watch a video. The best way for it to work is if you do not say anything while watching. If you've seen it before, just watch silently until it is finished."
- Play video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJG698U2Mvo
 - If you do not have a way to project the video, you can show it on a laptop or even a cell phone. It is a short video.
- Ask, "How many of you did not see the gorilla in the first part of the video?" Have students show hands.
- Say, "This was a study that shows how we can easily lose sight of things if we do not pay attention, or put focus on them. This is the same with our Heavenly Parent. If we are too focused on ourselves and what we are doing, we lose sight of how present God really is, and then we lose touch in our relationship with Him/Her."

- Put the chart paper on the wall and write *What is one thing we can do to focus more on God in our daily lives?*
 - Say, "You will each get a post-it note. Write down one way you can put more focus on God in your daily life. Think of one action step you can do this week, write it on the post-it note, and stick it on the chart paper."
 - Give them a few minutes to write their action steps.
 - After they are all posted, read each one aloud to share the different ideas that they came up with (do not need to say names).
- **Personal Reflection Points (7 minutes)**
 - Allow some quiet time for the youth to answer the question below in their Il Shim notebooks. Feel free to play some quiet and reflective music in the background.
 - *Consider the areas in your life that you feel the most joy. How can you see or feel God's presence during these activities?*
- **This Week's Homework: (5 minutes)**
 - Watch this Divine Principle lecture with your parents by Gerry Servito entitled "Creation-Who is God?", dplife.info/blog/view/dojo_posts/1863/
 - After watching the video, discuss these questions with your parents and write the answers down in your packet:
 - What is the "heart" of God?
 - What makes God a "personal God"?
 - How can our surroundings help us to understand God?
 - Throughout the week, write down two ways you saw or experienced God/God's Love/Joy in your notebooks. It's ok if you are still figuring out where you stand with God. This journaling exercise is meant to be an opportunity to discover who God is and where you might find Him/Her.
- **Closing Prayer (3 minutes)**
 - Offer a closing prayer focusing on developing our relationship with our Heavenly Parent and recognizing God's presence in our lives.

Session 2 Reading: Your Heavenly Parent and You

Who Is God, Really?

Who is God? What is God? Is God really there?

If you've ever asked yourself these questions, you are not alone. Having questions about God is a normal part in the search for faith. If you haven't asked yourself these questions yet, then now is a good time to think about them! The many religious groups that have developed over the course of history may differ in their practices of faith. However, they all agree on one thing: there is some type of higher power. This is what we call "God." While each person's relationship with God may be different, we all have one thing in common: we are God's Children, and that makes God our Heavenly Parent. As Unificationists, we call God our Heavenly Parent because we recognize that God has the heart of both a father and a mother.

The pretty amazing thing about God is that we can spend an eternity exploring our relationship with Him/Her. There is no end to the pieces of God we can discover. A big part of that experience is that we are continually growing ourselves. Our relationship with God requires participation from each end, so that means God is responding to whatever we are going through and wherever we are at in our lives. So one day, God may be supporting you in a big test you have coming up, and the next day God may be helping you work out a fight you had with your sibling. It's the same God, just a different situation in life. God is present and wants to be included in all of it!

// Section Recap: It is normal, and even necessary, to question God's existence. We can spend our whole lives understanding who God is. As we put in more and more effort into knowing our Parent, we will be able to see our relationship grow too.

God is Present

Because of God's invisible nature, it can be difficult to think about what it means to build a relationship with our Heavenly Parent. The Divine Principle is our faith's main scripture, which shares God's Truth and a deeper understanding of the Bible. In the first chapter of Divine Principle, we learn about the purpose of creation, and that God's heart behind creating the universe was joy. God wanted to have someone to love and laugh with, and that led Him/Her to YOU! God loves you and loves all of His/Her children with the deepest love imaginable. I don't know about you, but that sounds like someone I'd like to get to know!

God made each of us as unique representations of His/Her nature. That means each one of us will have a unique relationship with God. If God created the universe for the sake of joy, then the best place to start when building your relationship with God is there. Where do you feel joy? Who or what makes you smile or happy? Where or when do you feel the most joy? Is there a place that you feel "in your element," such as sports, music, or a subject in school? You may not realize it, but these are all places that God is most present in your life.

God wants nothing more than for you to be truly happy, and He/She wants to experience that happiness with you! It may take some time to figure out the ways that you relate best with God, but you will get there - have patience. Perhaps you're not sure where to start? Here are a few suggestions to consider when finding the ways you experience God best:

- Nature and Creation
- Sports, Music and The Arts
- Passion and Expression
- Holy Environments and Religious Traditions
- Family and Friends

// Section Recap: The Divine Principle says that God created each of us to live with, laugh with, and feel joy with. God wants to be present in our lives, and is with us in everything we do. The relationship that he has with each of us is unique and meant just for us.

This Relationship's A Two-Way Street

Just like every relationship, your relationship with God requires active participation. Imagine you had a friend that you loved very much. Now pretend that you've tried contacting them every day for the past month but they never returned your calls or messages. That's not very much of a relationship is it? The same is true with God. While it may be hard to recognize for now, God is talking to you and reaching out to you every day. God is playing His/Her part in our relationship but we need to do the same. We need to set aside time everyday to talk to God, connect with God, and relate with God. Some people can do that through prayer, some can do it through taking a walk in nature, and some can do by taking care of others. The point is they all work, you just have to find what works for you!

Up until this point, you have either been following your parents' lead as far as spirituality goes, or have been looking for something deeper on your own. It is so important to know where you're coming from in faith journey. Now that you're a teenager, however, it's time for you to take it even further. Try practicing your spirituality in your own time as well as the time you do so with your parents. Take your own initiative to talk to God or invite God into your activities. Say a prayer at the start and end of your day by yourself. If prayer is hard for you, try journaling to God. Try talking to people you respect about God. There are so many ways to start growing in your faith journey. If you are able to take these kinds of steps in your spiritual life, then your relationship with God will grow tremendously!

God is so excited for you to get to know each other on a deeper and more personal level. In our current society God can feel so far away from us. But that was not God's desire. God created human beings so we could interact with our Heavenly Parent in every moment and in a natural way. And that's what it means to have a mature relationship with God. For now, we need time to practice and develop our spiritual life so that we can build up healthy habits. So enjoy the journey and discovery of your Heavenly Parent, He/She is pretty awesome!

// Section Recap: Each relationship we have in our lives takes effort from each person involved. This is the same with our relationship with God. Just like you make effort to message your friends or go on outings with your family, you need to make time for God as well. Invite God into everything you do.

Session 3: Your Family - Your School of Love

Supplies for this session: *Would You Rather sheet, pens, markers for each person, post-it notes.*

- **Welcome and Check In (5 minutes)**

- Acknowledge the participants for their work thus far.
- Introduce what the session will be about:
 - The four realms of heart and how that applies to their life
 - Their relationship with their parents
 - Distractions to living a lifestyle of abstinence
- Share what they can gain from their investment into the session:
 - A greater understanding of what love means, and how this can lead to more fulfilling relationships
 - Steps to creating a better relationship with their parents

- **Play an Icebreaker (10 minutes)**

Choose one of the following icebreakers to start off the session:

- *Question Game*
 - Everyone stands in a circle
 - The youngest goes first by asking a question to their left
 - The next person then asks a question to their left as soon as person 1 finishes
 - Keep going in the circle
 - If someone hesitates, or answers a question they are out*
 - Keep going until there is a winner
 - *Questions can't be repeated in a round until somebody gets out
- *Would You Rather*
 - Give students the *Would You Rather* sheet and give a few minutes for students to circle their choices
 - When ready, read each one out. If they chose A, they will stand at one side of the room. If they chose B, they will stand on the other side of the room. (*For example:* "Would you rather have all the traffic lights you approach be green or never have to stand in line again?" If they chose the A answer, they will go on one side. If they chose the B answer, they will walk to the other side).
 - Do this for each question and they can see who chose similar answers.

- **Review the Homework (10 minutes)**

- Go over the answers to these questions regarding the DP Lecture they watched this week. Keep in mind that the youth may have a variety of answers. It may be a good idea to address these answers in a discussion format with you making the concluding points so everyone is on the same page. Make short points, but do not spend too much time on this section.

- What is the "heart" of God?
 - What makes God a "personal God"?
 - How can our surroundings help us to understand God?
 - This week the youth were to record moments when they saw or experienced God this past week. Have them turn to the person next to them and take a couple of minutes to share these moments.
- **II Shim Session Reading (15 minutes)**
 - Read through the "Session 3 Reading: Your Family - Your School of Love"
 - Just like the last session, youth will split into partners and take turns reading. Give each a highlighter.
 - After they finish a section, they will highlight one or two main thoughts that stood out to them. They will discuss why those thoughts stood out to them, and then continue reading.
- **Discussion: (15 minutes)**
 - Post 3 pieces of chart paper on the walls in the room, spread out. Write each of the following questions, one question on each chart paper. Split into 3 groups and have each group stand in front of a question. Give each person a marker (or pen).
 - Say, "Take some time to answer the different questions on the walls. Write your answer on the chart paper. When finished with all 3 questions, walk around again. But this time, you can read the different answers that people have written."
 - 1. What is your favorite family tradition?
 - 2. What have you learned from being in the sibling realm of heart? (Explain that if they do not have siblings, they can think of their close friends).
 - 3. What is one area of your life that you could be more understanding towards your parents?
 - After you see people are all finished and reading other responses, have everyone sit back down. You can read a few of the responses for each question.
- **Activity: Identifying Labels (15 minutes)**
 - Give each person two post-it notes
 - Ask everyone to make a list of all the labels they give their parents (each parent on a separate post-it note), both good and bad.
 - It's a good idea to give an example of a label you have given to your parents in the past such as, "bossy" or "dorky."
 - Ask everyone to circle the most common negative label they give to each parent.
 - Give everyone an opportunity to share about these two points either in small groups or in pairs:
 - What is the biggest label they have give for each parent?
 - How could your relationship with your parent change if they stopped labeling them that way?

- **Personal Reflection Points (7 minutes)**
- Allow some quiet time for the youth to write and/or think about these questions in their Il Shim notebooks. Feel free to play some quiet and reflective music in the background.
 - How is your relationship with your parents currently?
 - How would you like your relationship with your parents to be?
 - What can you do to be the son or daughter they hope for you to be?
- **This Week's Homework: (5 minutes)**
 - Find a unique way to serve and/or take care of your parents this week. Try to think from their point of view so you can find a service they will truly appreciate. Be ready to share about what you did and their reaction in class next week.
 - Spend time interviewing your parents about their lives using the interview questions in your Il Shim packet. Write down the answers to their questions.
 - Read from the Cheon Seong Gyeong Book 5, Chapter 1, Section 4: The Family is the Base of Happiness (pages 489- 493). At the end of the reading, have a conversation and share your thoughts with your parents.
- **Closing Prayer (3 minutes)**
- Offer a closing prayer focusing on opening up communication between parents and children and learning to see from one another's viewpoint.

Session 3 Reading: Your Family - Your School of Love

The Four Realms of Heart

Our families are the people who help shape us into who we are and who we will become. As babies, our parents teach us how to eat, use the bathroom, and become self-sufficient. As we get older, we learn how to interact with others from both our parents and siblings. True Parents, Rev. and Mrs. Moon, teach us in the Unificationist faith that the family is the "school of love" in which we learn how to grow our hearts. As Unificationists, we believe that by working on the relationships within our family, we will be able to also learn how to love all people in the world as an extension of our family.

True Parents have brought us the incredible knowledge of the Four Realms of Heart. This is seen as the blueprint by which we are meant to grow and be able to love as God loves. The Four Realms are represented through four stages of relationships that each human being goes through in their family:

1. *Children's love*: the love you learn to give and receive as a child
2. *Siblings love*: the love you learn to give and receive with your brothers/sisters
3. *Conjugal love*: the love you learn to give and receive with your spouse
4. *Parental love*: the love you learn to give and receive as a parent

The basic idea is that as you go through life, you will learn to expand your heart and love others in a deeper way.

// Section Recap: The family provides the understanding of how to love others. Throughout our lives, we will go through each of the Four Realms of Heart. By working on our relationships involved in each of these stages, we can get closer to becoming more mature, more loving, and more like God.

Learning to Love Step-By-Step

As youth, your job is to receive the love of your parents and return *filial piety* (love, respect, and honor) back to them. As siblings (and this includes friends along with your actual brothers and sisters) you learn camaraderie, teamwork, loyalty, and friendship. When you get married you experience romantic love, intimacy, and the process of achieving your dreams together. And lastly, when you become a parent, you learn what it means to love someone unconditionally - loving someone so much that there's nothing they could do to stop you from loving them.

Each of these realms should be learned in sequential order, meaning you should ideally have a good relationship with your parents and siblings/friends before you get married. If we were to skip a realm

without mastering it and then jump into a new realm, it means we haven't grown our ability to love in that way, which can impact us and those around us negatively. The realms are meant to build upon one another. We are meant to become a good husband and wife before becoming parents. Once we pass through all four realms, we will have experienced all the types of relationships God designed for us. Ideally, we will have grown our capacity to love so much so that we will then become like God.

// Section Recap: The Four Realms of Heart occur in a specific order. Although they can overlap, they should mainly be worked on in that order as we grow. If we move onto another stage in our lives without improving our ability to love in the previous realm, it can negatively impact the relationships we have.

Understanding Your Parents

While that is God's design, we, however, live in a world that is still reaching towards perfection. That means that many people haven't had the chance to master the different realms of heart. That includes your parents! They are also still working on learning to love the way God does. They've been working on it for a while, so they've made a lot of progress, but learning to love like God is not an easy task to accomplish. They may still be working through things in their lives. They may not be perfect yet, but they are doing the best that they can. So try to give them a break sometimes, because they are still learning how to become the right parents for you! After all, they've never been parents to you at this stage of your life.

When you were conceived, your parents were so excited to meet you. They waited months and months until the day you arrived. Then, as you grew, they eagerly awaited your first steps, first words, and your first day of school. They wiped your poopy butts, celebrated your achievements, and worked hard so you can have food to eat each meal.

You may not always see it, but they love you so much. This is because each parent expresses love in different ways. They are trying hard to balance being involved in your life, while still giving you the freedom you deserve. It's not an easy balance to strike, and each person's situation is unique. When communicating with your parents, you've probably noticed that you are often coming from different points of view. That's normal and natural! And because of that, your parents may say things that upset you. You may not always see it, but their true intention is for you to be successful and happy. It's just that sometimes, *they don't know how to express that in a way you will receive it.*

Here are some examples of what parents might say and what they actually mean. We call it our "Parent Dictionary Translation":

| | | | |
|---------------------------|--|---|--|
| When They Say: | What were you thinking? Are you crazy? Why would you do something like that? | What are you doing watching T.V./playing on the computer? Did you do all of your homework? | I don't like those friends that you are hanging out with. You are getting too close to that boy or girl. |
| What They Mean Is: | I love you more than life itself, and sometimes it frustrates when you make choices like that. I know you know better! | You have so much potential. I want you to have a great future, so being responsible and making time for school will help with that. | Step back and think, "Are the people I surround myself with really helping me become a better person?" We want you to wait until you are more mature and ready to commit to someone. |

// Section Recap: When our relationships with our parents are strained, it can be difficult to see the love they have for us. We have to think back to the times when they showed care, guidance, and support. They may not always express their love in a way that we can see or receive, so we need to make an effort to be open to what they are saying or doing.

The Effects of "Labeling"

In our relationships with our parents, it's common that we have built up some concepts about the type of people they are based on our experiences. We call this *labeling* people, and it can be both positive or negative. For instance, we might say my Mom is "cute" or my Dad is "close-minded." The problem with labeling people is that it limits our perspective of them. If we think our parent is a "bad listener," then we automatically assume they will never be able to listen. Our negative labels define our parents in a way that distances them from us.

However, the truth about our parents is that they are changing and growing every day, just like we are. They, too, have the ability to learn and grow, even if we don't always believe that. If we keep our concepts of them, we will never notice that they have actually changed and become a good listener! In our society we tend to think our parents aren't "cool" and don't understand what it's like to live in this world. But that's not exactly true. We have to give them a chance to become the best parents that they can be and put down our labels for a while. They may not be as good at technology as you are, but they do know a thing or two about life!

A healthy relationship between a parent and child requires two active parties. Your parents are trying to find the right ways to communicate and support you, and we should do the same! Here are some tips to consider to improve your communication with your parents:

- **Switch points of view:** Think about the situation from your parents point of view. When they tell you not to do something, ask yourself, "Why don't they want me to do this?"
- **Ease their concerns:** Ease their concern with a solution you can commit to. If your parents are worried about you spending too much time with a boy or girl, talk to them about what safeguards you have in place to keep your relationship as just friends. Take time to explain the situation to them.
- **Listen to them:** Don't shut them out. Take time to listen and understand. If you feel strongly about a topic, you should express yourself, but give your parents a chance to be heard as well.
- **Think before you speak:** Be kind with your words. If you are having a tough conversation, be careful not to be insulting or criticizing. They are entitled to their own opinions just as you are.
- **Use "I" statements:** Focus on "I" statements such as "I feel like you're not understanding my point of view," instead of "you're not listening to me!"

The beauty of families is that no matter what you go through, you will still be family! We will all go through our ups and downs in our relationships with our family members. Sometimes your brothers and sisters may drive you crazy, and sometimes you may be so happy to have them. That's life with a family! Even though they may not be perfect, we're lucky to have them and can always find ways to improve our relationships with them.

// Section Recap: Our relationship with our parents is not always easy. However, if we label them and perceive them in a certain way, we cannot be open to the possibility that they can change and grow. We cannot expect our parents to be perfect, and should try our best to communicate and understand them.

Parent Interview Questions

The intention of the interview is to get a deeper understanding of who your parents are and what is really important to them. Be open to the possibility that there is a lot of depth to your parents that you may not have seen quite yet, and that this is an opportunity to see more of that depth.

The way to gain the most from this interview is to really own it. You do not have to ask every question on this list. You are encouraged to create your own list of 5-8 questions. You are welcome to take questions from the list below that you think would be valuable to ask your parents, and you are welcome to create your own questions. You can interview your parents individually or together.

1. What were you like as a teenager?
2. What was your first impression of Dad/ Mom?
3. What is a moment where Dad/ Mom had a profound impact on you?
4. How has your view of life changed when you became a parent?
5. What was I like as a baby?
6. What is your favorite memory of you and me when I was growing up?
7. What do you like about the Unificationist faith?
8. What is a core belief or commitment that you live by?
9. What really inspires you these days?

Session 4: Becoming the Best "Me"

Supplies for this session: MandM Conversations sheet, mandm candy, markers for each person, 4 pieces of chart paper, laptop to show Youtube video, pens, highlighters,

1. Welcome and Check In (5 minutes)

- Welcome everyone to their fourth session and remind them about the retreat next weekend! They are half way through the Il Shim program!
- Introduce what the session will be about:
 - What it means to be a person of integrity
 - How to balance God's standard with true love in our society
 - Becoming a person who can impact the world around them
- Share what they can gain from their investment into the session:
 - A vision for the kind of person they want to become
 - An understanding of how our environment impacts us
 - A chance to discover a way to use your personal skills and passions to help others

2. Play an Icebreaker (10 minutes)

3. *The MandM Game*

- Have students in 3-4 per group. Give one copy of *The MandM Game* sheet and half a bag of mandms to each group. Tell them they will go in a circle and blindly pick an mandm. They will have to answer the question that matches the color of the mandm they chose. If they already answered a chosen question, they can choose again.

4. Review the Homework (10 minutes)

- Have everyone share the following questions, popcorn style (you choose the first person, they share and then choose the next, then that person shares and chooses the next, etc.). All students do not have to answer each question if it will take too much time.
 - one new thing they learned about their parents or something that really stuck with them during their interview.
 - the ways in which they served their parents and what their parents reaction was.
- Reiterate the main point of the Hon Dok Hae Reading; a person cannot truly be happy without their family.

5. Il Shim Session Reading (10 minutes)

- Students will read through the "Session 4 Reading: Becoming the Best 'Me'"
- Split youth into partners, preferably someone they have not yet read with, and they will take turns reading. Give each a highlighter.

- After they finish a section, they will highlight one or two main thoughts that stood out to them. They will discuss why those thoughts stood out to them, and then continue reading.

6. Discussion (10 minutes)

- Say, "We read how we want to be better people, but often our circle of friends can heavily influence who we're going to become. We're going to watch a short 4 minute clip of a Christian pastor speaking on this specific topic."
- Show the following video from Christian pastor, Rich Wilkerson Jr. **Just show from 5:50-9:50.** This means skip to 5 min and 50 sec in and stop at 9 min 50 seconds into the video.
- Video link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=bgz9Olqloag
- Discussion options:
 - **Option A:** If you have 10+ people, have half of your group sit in a circle, facing outwards. Then, have the other half sitting in a circle around them, facing inwards. Each person should be facing someone, and sitting in front of someone. Ask the following questions, one at a time, and then have the outer people get up and move to the right, to a new person, to answer the next question.
 - **Option B:** Split your group in half, so that you have two discussion circles. Sit in each circle for a bit, listening to and guiding the discussion.

Discussion questions:

1. What are some positive traits that are similar between you and your closest friends/people in your life?
2. What are some negative traits that are similar between you and your closest friends/people in your life?
3. What type of people do you want to be in your "circle"?

7. Activity: Building the Best Habits (15 minutes)

- Tape 4 large pieces of paper on the wall and title them respectively: Body, Mind, Heart, and Spirit. (If you have a smaller group, you may want to do this at a table with smaller papers instead. They can write on one, then pass it to the next person).
- Say, "An important part of becoming the best version of ourselves is developing good habits that shape us into the types of people we want to be. On the walls, there are four areas - Body, Mind, Heart, and Spirit. You will pick one to start at, and write one thing that you currently do in that area that helps you become a better person. Be specific. Once you wrote on all four, you can sit down until everyone is finished."
- Give the following as examples for what you're looking for:
 - Body: Playing soccer
 - Mind: Reading books
 - Heart: Giving my Mom a massage

- Spirit: Going to Youth Group
- Hand out markers and let students write their responses.
- After everyone is finished, read aloud some of the responses for each. Say that they can use each others' responses as ideas for what they can do at home.
- *If you have extra time: Have them turn to someone next to them and share about one idea they saw on the wall that they would like to try themselves.*

8. Personal Reflection Points (7 minutes)

Project the following questions for the students to answer in their notebooks, or just read each one aloud one by one as they answer in their notebooks:

- When people talk about you, how do you want to be remembered?
- What is one of your greatest passions/interests, and how could you use that to impact the world around you either now or in the future?
- Make a list of 3 things you can do this week to impact someone or something around you.

2. This Week's Homework (5 minutes):

- Watch this Divine Principle lecture with your parents by Gerry Servito entitled "What is our Purpose?", dplife.info/blog/view/dojo_posts/creation-part-3/ After watching the lecture, discuss these questions with your parents and write the answers down in your packet:
 - What is indirect dominion and direct dominion/perfection?
 - Why did God give us freedom and responsibility?
 - What are life and "death" elements and how do they impact you?
- Read from the Cheong Seon Gyeong, Book 12, Chapter 3, Section 2: High Noon Settlement and a Life of Resonance (pages 1310-1313). At the end of the reading, share a point, or even a question, that stood out to you with your parents.
- Use the list of 3 things you came up with during your reflection today to impact the world around you. Try to complete all three by the next session.

3. Closing Prayer (3 minutes)

4. Offer a prayer focusing on the potential and creativity of each youth and finding ways for them to impact the world around them.

Session 4 Reading: Becoming the Best "Me"

Think for a moment about someone in your life that you look up to. What is a quality about them that makes you respect them? When we think about these people, and even some of the well-known people in history who have impacted the world, we see a few common qualities. One of them can be their ability and desire to make a positive impact on the world around them. When we hear stories of people who have overcome insurmountable odds and persevered to be victorious, we can't help but feel the tugs of our heart strings. Each of us wants to be a part of that kind of story. What if we could be remembered as someone who made a positive difference in the world? Is it even possible? If so, how?

Living with Integrity

Rev. Moon's personal motto for his life is "Before conquering the universe, I must first conquer myself." What does it mean exactly to "conquer myself"? It means to become a person of *integrity*. Having integrity means being a person who is honest and righteous. A person of integrity will do what they know is right, even if others don't agree. They will make efforts to follow their internal moral compass. Many people can talk about what it means to be a good person, but there aren't many people who practice what they preach. We need to become people who can match what they say and believe with what they do.

It can be hard to practice being a person of integrity in today's society. Perhaps your friends at school don't have the same values as you. They can put you in a situation where you are being pressured to do or say something you don't want to. Have you ever felt your friends were pushing you to do something even though you felt it wasn't right? That's the effect of peer pressure. This is not the healthiest environment to be in. You should choose environments where you and your conscience can feel clear. Your friends are some of the most influential people in your life, so it's important to surround yourself with people who will help you become a better person - not people who bring you down. If you want to be smart, be with people who are smart. If you want to be successful, be with people who are successful. You **are** your environment, and you have the choice to decide with whom you surround yourself. If you feel like some of your friends aren't good for you, it's time to walk away. It may be hard to do at first, but your life will start moving in a better direction.

In our world, it can be hard to stand up for something that is not popular, or widely accepted, by society, and that's why we have to practice being people of integrity. However, we also have to strike a balance between being Godly people and loving others as our brothers and sisters. We may not agree with the lifestyle choices of others, but that doesn't warrant treating them poorly or judging them. God's heart towards all of His/Her children is nothing but love. God never judges us or holds things against us, so we should do the same with others. This is the ultimate standard with which we should hold ourselves up to.

// Section Recap: Integrity means making the right choices despite the circumstances. Having the right crowd around us can make it easier for us to make the right choices. Surround yourself with people who will lift you up, not bring you down. You are who you surround yourself with.

Making a Difference

If we can become people of true character who can balance integrity and love, we can also become people who can positively impact the world around us. We can become the people who can create God's home here on earth. In the Unificationist faith, we call God's kingdom on earth *Cheon Il Guk* (Chun – eel – gook). True Parents, Rev. and Mrs. Moon, have taught us that we should become owners of Cheon Il Guk, meaning that we take action into making this world God's kingdom – God's home.

An owner is someone who takes responsibility over something. If you own a car, you take care of it. You fill it up with gas when it's empty, you get oil changes regularly, you clean it, and maintain all of its parts so it runs well. As a Unificationist, becoming an owner of Cheon Il Guk means we take care of the things around us as God intended. If our physical environment is covered with littered, we clean it up. If the people in our environment aren't treating each other with love and respect, we speak up. If someone is hurting, we lend a helping hand. When our conscience urges us about a particular situation, we step up and do something about it.

One of the greatest parts of becoming an owner of Cheon Il Guk is that we can help create it with our talents and interests. Each of us has some unique passions and skills that we have developed over the years. Some of you may have a subject in school that you excel in or really enjoy. Some of you may have a passion for sports, technology, music, or one of your hobbies. These are all important parts of what makes you who you are, and God wants you to be excellent in those areas. Becoming an owner of Cheon Il Guk also means that you can use your passions and skills to make the world a better place. Use your talents to gain influence in your community and in society. Be the best at what you do, and see how others gravitate towards you.

When people think about changing the world, they often think that they are too small to make a difference. We turn to those who have money, power, or intelligence and tend to rely on them to make the right choices for society. However, we cannot just count on others to make the world a better place. You matter, and you can make a difference anywhere you are. God designed each of us with the potential to do great things. Even if you don't think you have much to offer, remember that there is no one in the world like you. You are the only one who can offer your insights, your thoughts, and your impact to the world. The world needs you just the way you are!

// Section Recap: Being an owner of Cheon Il Guk means taking action and making God's kingdom on earth a reality. As God's children, we are entrusted with the responsibility to change

this world for the better. Don't rely on the rich and famous to change society. Use your talents and passions to gain influence and attract others.

Session 5: All About Being a Unificationist

Supplies for this session: paper, pens, highlighters, laptop to project polleverywhere.com and Kahoot game (projector helps as well), a few phones/devices

1. Welcome and Check In (5 minutes)

- a. Welcome everyone to their fifth session.
- b. Introduce what the session will be about:
 - Unificationist traditions and core beliefs
 - Heart of True Parents
- c. Share what they can gain from their investment into the session:
 - A deeper understanding of why we practice certain traditions in our community
 - An appreciation for the investment of True Parents

2. Ice Breaker (10 minutes)

3. Choose one of the following ice breaker activities to kick off the session!

4. 1. *Shoe Talk (for a larger group)*

- a. Split the group into 2 halves.
- b. Get each half of the group to line up against opposite sides of the room or hall.
- c. Get each person to take of 1 shoe and make a pile of their team's shoes.
- d. Get each person from one team to come a select a random shoe from the other team's pile and then find the person that shoe belongs to.
- e. Once they have found their match, ask one of the questions below and have the pairs answer them with each other. Give 30 seconds to 1 minute, then have them put their shoes back in a pile.
- f. Get the other team to do the same process with the first team's pile of shoes. Switch back and forth as you ask questions:
 - What do you like to do on the weekends?
 - What is your favorite food?
 - What is something you fear?
 - What is something that annoys you?
 - What is one of your favorite TV shows?
 - What is something the other person doesn't know about you?
 - How many pillows do you sleep with?
 - What is your favorite holiday?

2. *Two Truths and a Lie (for a smaller group)*

- Give every person a sheet of paper and a pen.
- Have each person write down three things - two truths about themselves and one lie. They should not be in a specific order.
- When finished, each person will share their three statements, and everyone else will vote on which one is the lie. After, the person will reveal which one is a lie.

5. Review Homework (10 minutes)

- a. Go over the answers to these questions regarding the DP Lecture they watched this week. Keep in mind that the youth may have a variety of answers. It may be a good idea to address these answers in a discussion format with you making the concluding points so everyone is on the same page.
 - What is indirect dominion and direct dominion/perfection?
 - Why did God give us freedom and responsibility?
 - What are life and "death" elements and how do they impact you?
- b. Have a few people share what stood out to them in the reading. Reiterate the main point of the Hoon Dok Hae Reading; we should strive to become people with no shadow who lead a life with integrity.
- c. Share one of the 3 acts you accomplished this week and how it impacted the world around you.

6. II Shim Session Reading (20 minutes)

- a. Students will read through the "Session 5 Reading."
- b. Split youth into partners, preferably someone they have not yet read with or have not read with in a while, and they will take turns reading. Give each a highlighter.
- c. After they finish a section, they will highlight one or two main thoughts that stood out to them. They will discuss why those thoughts stood out to them, and then continue reading.

7. Discussion: (15 minutes)

8. Log onto Poll Everywhere, just like in Session 1:
 1. Go to www.polleverywhere.com
 2. Login in with:
 - **username:** yayam@ familyfed.org **password** yayam2020
 3. Click the first question from Session 5.
 4. Once the poll opens, students' directions on how to text their responses will be at the top of the screen (if someone doesn't have a phone, they can switch off with someone else). *Make sure the Active button is clicked.*
 5. Give time for students to text their responses.
 - What part of our Unificationist values do you connect with most?
 - What is one thing you admire about True Parents and why?
 - What are your thoughts on the idea of the Marriage Blessing?
6. If you somehow cannot make the site work, you can have students share in pairs, and then switch partners for each question.

9. Activity: Unificationist Trivia (15 minutes)

Students will compete for who answers the most correctly...with the fastest timing! You will use the online game program Kahoot. It is simple, and the

best part is that students can play with their phones! Questions will be based on the reading.

- Students will first **practice** how the game works with a simple math game. It will ask multiplication questions the kids should know.
- Make sure the kids can **see the screen**, whether projected or on a laptop. They will only see the answer on the screen.
- Get into groups of 3 or 4 and have each with one person chosen as the team captain. This person will use the device to answer all the questions. If you have 4 or less people, they can play individually. Make sure each team has a device.
- Open this link for the practice round: play.kahoot.it/v2/?quizId=0604c1ee-3579-4ad5-9b4e-606cfdb5085c
- Click Classic Mode - this will still work with a team
- You should now have a Game Pin projected on the screen. Tell students to go to kahoot.it on their phones - yes, that is the link.
- Once they have it, they can enter the game pin and their team name. This will project on the screen after they enter it. Once you see all teams have entered their names, you can click **Start**. Follow the instructions on the screen. Keep clicking **Next** when necessary.
- After students have gotten used to how Kahoot works, you can do the same with the trivia link below:
 - play.kahoot.it/v2/?quizId=fd4832b0-cb97-40e7-9d15-a871cd781c17

10. Personal Reflection Points (7 minutes)

11. Allow some quiet time for the youth to write and/or think about these questions in their II Shim notebooks. Feel free to play some quiet and reflective music in the background.
 - a. What aspects of our church do you appreciate most?
 - b. What aspects of our church do you not yet understand?
 - c. Who can you talk to about the aspects of our church you don't understand yet?

12. This Week's Homework: (5 minutes)

- a. Ask your parents these questions and write their answers down in your packet:
 - Who are True Parents to you?
 - What do you admire most about them?
 - What did they teach you that changed your perspective on life?

**If your parents are not Unificationist, share with them what you

learned about who True Parents are. Write down their reaction/thoughts to what you were able to share.

- b. Watch this Divine Principle lecture with your parents by Rev. Kevin Thompson entitled "Purpose of the Messiah Part 2", dplife.info/blog/view/dojo_posts/purpose-of-the-messiah-part-2/ After watching the lecture, discuss these questions with your parents and write the answers down in your packet:
 - How come the Messiah came and was killed if that wasn't God's original intention?

- What are the barriers to us recognizing the Messiah?
 - What was John the Baptist's role in welcoming Jesus?
- c. Offer a 24-hour fasting condition with your parents during this week. The purpose of the condition should be related to this week's content, "Being a Unificationist." You and your parents can decide the specific purpose so that it is most relevant to you and your experience.

13. Closing Prayer (3 minutes)

14. Offer a closing prayer focusing on the journey of understanding what it means to be a Unificationist and wish everyone a great week!

Session 5 Reading: All About Being a Unificationist

Our Core Values

The word "unification" means to be *united*. So it makes sense that Unificationism is about bringing together people of different religions, races, cultures, and walks of life. A key factor in our faith is that we are all God's children and that makes us brothers and sisters - one family under God. One of the important goals of our church is to bring unity and healing among the divisions of the world in order to bring peace and joy to God's heart. The way that each of us does that, however, may be a little different from each other. But it's all about the same thing: bringing humanity back to God, our Heavenly Parent.

If you ask any member of our church what it means to be a Unificationist, they may say something different. And that's OK! Each person's faith is as unique as their own personality and we celebrate that. Although every person may practice their faith in a unique way, there are a few things we all agree on that make us a Unificationist community. When in doubt, we can always turn to the Divine Principle and the teachings of True Parents to help us find clarity. Here a few highlights from the teachings of True Parents that make our faith community different from others:

- God is our parent and has the heart of both a mother and father.
- God has been working throughout all of human history to bring joy to humankind since the time of the Fall, which was the result of immature love relationships between Adam, Eve, and Lucifer.
- God designed the family as the "school of love" in which we learn how to love and take care of others through the relationships within our family.
- Father and Mother Moon have taken on the messianic mission of completing the work left undone during Jesus' life at the time of his crucifixion.
- The Divine Principle is the main theology of our community and has deep insights concerning God and human history.
- The Marriage Blessing is our opportunity to receive salvation as a family through our True Parents.

// Section Recap: The Unification faith has certain core teachings that makes it unique, such as its vision to unify all types of people and bring peace to the world. Each person has his/her own spiritual journey to take in order to create their personal relationship with God and practice these values as their own.

Who are "True Parents?"

As Unificationists, we often refer back to the teachings and words of True Parents. But who exactly are "True Parents"?

Rev. Sun Myung Moon was born in the countryside of North Korea which, at the time, was suffering from Japanese rule. At a young age, he continuously searched for truth and understanding from God, especially on how to free the world and his people from suffering. At the age of 16, during a deep prayer on Easter Sunday, he had a spiritual encounter with Jesus. In this moment, Jesus spoke to him about the truth of his life and the unfinished work that needed to be done in order to bring salvation to humankind. Jesus entrusted him to dedicate his life to completing this work. From this day forward, Rev. Moon sought to share God's message to the world and bring peace on earth. He later met Hak Ja Han, to whom he would marry and share this mission. Through their marriage, they became the first couple in history who would truly stand as a physical, unified image of God. This is why we call them our "True Parents" - Rev. Sun Myung Moon being our *True Father* and Rev. Hak Ja Han Moon being our *True Mother*.

True Parents have worked tirelessly throughout their lifetime to pave the way for God to reunite with His children. Their message was not always met with open arms, and therefore, they had to endure incredible suffering and persecution so that the culture of our world could change and we could find our way to our Heavenly Parent. They shared profound insights and truth with the world that help us to live a heavenly and righteous life. These insights were first written and published in our sacred text, *The Divine Principle*.

From his life-long efforts, True Father has created a legacy of peace based on the creation of God-centered families, valuing marriage between races, ethnicities, nations, and faiths through the Marriage Blessing. It is through the teachings of the Divine Principle that True Father has been able to speak with religious and political figures around the world to pave the way for interfaith dialogue and interfaith marriages. He also pushed to create systems for nations to move away from division and conflict towards peace. Today, True Father's legacy of peace has been taken up by our True Mother, who continues to officiate the Marriage Blessing and has made it her mantle to educate youth to become a generation of peacemakers who value God-centered living and God-centered marriage. The Il Shim program is one form of education that is made available to our youth in their journey towards that goal.

// Section Recap: Rev. Moon, our True Father, received a calling from Jesus himself to continue God's work that has been left undone. Since then, he has spent his entire life with his wife, our True Mother, sharing God and Jesus' message with the world. Our True Parents hope to have their legacy continue through the work of current and future generations of Unificationists.

Sharing Who We Are with Others

Being a young person in our faith, you may not always be sure why we do the things that we do. The traditions you practice as a Unificationist may be very different from those of your friends and you may sometimes have had a hard time explaining them. However, each of our traditions have a rich spiritual history and come directly from our True Parents. If you ever have questions about why we are doing something as Unificationists, we encourage you to ask your parents or a respected believer in your community. What a great way to take ownership of your faith! Here are a few of our unique traditions and a brief explanation of why we do them. These explanations are very short, so if you have more questions please talk to someone about them!

- *Praying in our own name:* We have received authority from True Parents to report and pray directly to God as His/Her children, instead of reporting through the use of someone else's name.
- *Hoon Dok Hae and Pledge:* Time at the beginning of each day to connect with God and read God's word so we can have a clear mind, heart, and spirit for the rest of our day.
- *Holy Songs:* Church songs that can create a positive spiritual environment. Father Moon wrote the words to many of these songs.
- *Holy Candles and Holy Salt:* Holy items that bless either our spiritual atmosphere or bless our physical goods. These holy items allow Heaven to create a heavenly environment around us.
- *Holy Ground:* Specific places that have been blessed and serve as places of direct connection to God and good spirit world.
- *Holy Days:* Special holidays that were created by our True Parents to celebrate important moments in providential history and the creation of a new culture.
- *The Marriage Blessing:* One of the most important traditions in our faith, in which a husband and wife offer their marriage to God by exchanging vows, drinking the holy wine, and representing the start of a heavenly blood lineage.
- *Seung Hwa:* A funeral service in which we honor the life and spirit of a person and send their spirit joyfully to the spiritual world.

As a young Unificationist, or someone even interested in the Unification faith, you will go through your own journey of discovery and creating your own spiritual life. The traditions of our church are a framework by which you can go on that path. You should always feel free to ask questions and understand the purpose and meaning behind the traditions of our church. There is great depth and meaning behind each of them. We carry on these traditions because of their spiritual value and the blessings and growth they bring to our lives and our world.

// Section Recap: Each of our church traditions is meant as a framework to mold ourselves into God's true children. The more we practice these traditions, the closer we can bring ourselves to God, our Heavenly Parent.

Checklist to Get Ready for the Retreat!

Please make sure to first look through the retreat schedule to familiarize yourself with what will be happening. It is suggested that you get some volunteers to help you with running the retreat. Here's a checklist to get you ready!

Things to Bring:

- ☐ Board/card games
- ☐ Snacks and drinks
- ☐ Each of these holy items in a goodie bag for each participant: holy salt, regular salt, holy candle, candle holder, regular candle, pledge print outs, wallet size TP picture for each participant. (Ask advice from someone in your community how you can attain these items).
- ☐ Items to make and show how to make holy salt and a holy candle
- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Speakers and computer/projection
- ☐ Cheon Seong Gyeong, Book 8, Chapter 1, Section 1: A Life of Faith (starting on page 793).
- ☐ Breakfast/lunch/dinner prepared
- ☐ Print outs Day 2 Lunch with Parents discussion questions
- ☐ Print outs of this The Great Discovery worksheet
- ☐ Just a couple copies of each of the World Religions articles

Things to Prepare:

- ☐ Songs to sing prior to presentations - it'd be great to have a guitar player!
- ☐ 15-20 min presentation on the Three Blessings and how they relate to the lives of youth (can be done by you or someone else you trust to do so)
- ☐ 15-20 min presentation focused on practical ways for the youth to discover and develop their relationship with God (can be done by you or someone else you trust to do so)
- ☐ Discussion questions typed to be projected or written out and ready to post somewhere for reference
- ☐ Service project in the community to do (transportation if necessary)
- ☐ Speakers for the 7:00 pm session: Being a Person of Integrity
- ☐ Soft music and upbeat music playlist
- ☐ 3 couples who can share their matching and blessing testimony: 10-15 min each.
- ☐ Invite parents to Day 2 lunch prior to the retreat. Parents will participate from 12:00-4:00 and will take their kids home afterwards.
- ☐ Invite pastor prior to the retreat to speak around 1:00 on Day 2: Sharing ideas on ways participants can get involved and volunteer in the community

Session 6: Il Shim 2 Day Retreat

God's Design for Me

Day 1: Owning the 1st Blessing

8:30 AM Arrivals and Board Games

Have some board games and staff ready to play with the youth as they come in. It's a good idea to choose board games that people can join at any time so no one feels left out. Here are some suggestions: Mad Gab, Taboo, Apples to Apples, etc.

This is also a good opportunity to check in with parents as they drop off their kids. Ask them how things are going and answer any questions they may have.

9:00 AM Break the Ice

Play some high energy games to get everyone pumped up for the retreat. Here are two games you can try:

Amoeba (good for a large group)

- Ask everyone to mingle around in a large space.
- Randomly call out group sizes and characteristics that the youth must gather in.

Here are some examples:

- "Groups of 4 with at least 1 girl"
- "Groups of 3 with 2 people wearing blue"
- "Groups of 6 with 3 people wearing glasses"
- Whomever is unable to join a group is "out" for this round.
- When you are left with only 2 people you can either crown them both as winners or use a game of rock, paper, scissors to determine the winner.

Jump In, Jump Out

- Have everyone join hands in a circle (you probably want no more than 10 people in a circle)
- Announce to the group that you want them to "Say what I say, and Do what I Say" and then say these directions in a random order:
 - Jump In
 - Jump Out
 - Jump Left
 - Jump Right
- So this would look like:
 - You: "Jump In"
 - Group: "Jump In" (Simultaneously jumping into the circle)
- Now it gets more challenging, try these rounds and get ready to laugh:
 - Say what I say, Do what I say
 - Say the Opposite, Do the Opposite
 - Say what I do, Do the opposite
 - Say the opposite, Do the opposite

9:30 AM Introductions

Use this time to go over the schedule for this weekend and answer any questions the youth may have. If you need to break into groups this would be a good time to do so.

10:00 AM Presentation # 1: God's Design for Me; The Three Blessings

1. Sing songs to prepare the atmosphere.
2. Presentation: The content of this presentation should focus on the Three Blessings and how they relate to the lives of youth. The talk should be about 20 minutes long.
3. Discussion in groups
 - a. What is one way you can work on accomplishing the first blessing - improving yourself, your mindset, and your life?
 - b. What is one way you can prepare for the second blessing - being ready and mature to share your life with someone else?
 - c. What is one way you can see yourself fulfilling the third blessing - caring for the earth as God would?

11:00 AM Presentation #2: Discovering Your Relationship with God

1. Sing songs to prepare the atmosphere.
2. Presentation: The content of this presentation should focus on practical ways for the youth to discover and develop their relationship with God. The talk should be about 20 minutes long.
3. Discussion in groups:
 - a. What is one way you know of that you connect with God currently?
 - b. What is one way you would like to try to connect with God?
 - c. Who is someone that can help you be accountable to your relationship with God?

12:00 PM Lunch

1:00 PM Service Project

An important part of the Il Shim Retreat is doing a service project. We want to teach our young people to embrace a lifestyle of living for the sake of others. This of course means more than just doing a service project every now and then, but this project is a great way to kick start that type of mentality. It would be a good idea to give a little blurb before the service project that encourages the youth to serve with the right heart and intention.

If you're having a hard time finding a service project to participate in, you can also do kind acts of service. Check out some ideas here:

www.randomactsofkindness.org/kindness-ideas

4:00 PM Breaks and Snacks

Have some free time and put out some snacks so the youth can have some much deserved downtime.

4:30 PM Learning About Our Faith and Others

For this next part of the retreat, you will first expose the participants to different major religions, and then they will focus more on Unificationism.

Part 1

- Explain that we will dive into learning about some of our faith traditions by first branching out and learning about a few of the major world religions.
- Before the video, ask participants to share what they may already know about either Islam, Taoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, or Christianity. Call on a few to share.
- Show video (stop at 5:06): www.youtube.com/watch?v=mayXM4wSJhM
 - Break into groups of 5. Assign each group with a world religion and provide for them the articles on that specific religion (Islam, Taoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity). *(If not enough participants, break into groups of 4 and don't hand out the Christianity article printout. They should be most familiar with that one).*
 - Say, "Your group will each read about your assigned religion. Then, discuss any similarities or differences you see with the Unification faith and that given religion."
 - Give about 10 minutes for them to do so.
 - After, gather back and ask one person from each group to share with everyone what they learned about that religion and any similarities or differences they noticed.

Part 2:

- Say, "It's important to be knowledgeable of other world religions, especially because as Unificationists, we believe in the unity and partnership of all religions. Interfaith collaboration is one aspect of our movement that really makes us beautiful. However, our True Parents have also set specific traditions in the Unification faith that sets us apart and brings us closer to God in our own way. As people who are interested in the Unification faith, it's important to understand how to carry out these traditions and the significance they hold. We will look into 3 that we read about in Session 5 - creating and using holy salt, holy candles, and understanding our faith Pledge."
- Get a table and have everyone gather around you. Show them how to prepare holy salt and the holy candle while they watch. Steps are provided below.
Here are directions for how to make each of this holy items:
 - Holy Salt: Explain that we use Holy Salt to sanctify a sacred place, the things we buy, and the place we live.
 - To make holy salt:

- Make seven equal piles of new salt in a row. Make one pile of equal size with seed holy salt in a row above the other piles.
- Mix the seed holy salt evenly with the new salt piles.
- Gather all piles into one pile and mix well.
- Offer a prayer: "I sanctify this in the name of the Cosmic Parent and the Parents of Heaven and Earth, the True Children's families, and (your name), owner of Cheon Il Guk. May the spirit of God and True Parents dwell within it. By Your holy power, allow this salt to become Holy Salt and be used to sanctify and bless our surroundings."
- To use holy salt: Sprinkle a small amount four times (top, bottom, right, left) and independently say: "I sanctify this in the name of the Cosmic Parent and the Parents of Heaven and Earth, the True Children's families, and (your name), owner of Cheon Il Guk."
- Holy Candle: Explain that we light a Holy Candle at the beginning of a prayer or meditation. The holy candle creates a good spiritual atmosphere that helps us make a connection with God. We use a special box or book or matches that are set aside for this purpose.
 - Give each youth a box or book of Holy Matches that have been sanctified with Holy Salt.
 - The multiplication ceremony requires 3 new candles and 1 seed Holy Candle. You will have to repeat this process as many times as needed to make enough for all of the youth. The new candle must be of white or a bright ivory color, and must be at least 12 to 15 cm long.
 - Prepare a candle holder or a place on which to put the seed Holy Candle.
 - The seed Holy Candle, placed on the candle holder, must be put in Heavenly Parent's position, and the newly purchased three candles are to be respectively put in Adam, Eve, and child's position in the form of the four-position foundation.
 - Offer a prayer such as: "In the name of the True Parents of Heaven, Earth, and Humankind, I would like to multiply the Holy Candle.."
 - Light the seed Holy Candle with Holy Matches.
 - Hold the seed Holy Candle with both hands (the right hand should go above and the left hand should support the candle from the bottom) and light the Adam, Eve, and Child's candle in respective order. Once that is done, the seed Holy Candle must be returned to its original position (Heavenly Parents' position)
 - Offer the concluding prayer while the candles are still lit such as: "Whenever these candles are burned, may it invite God and good spirit world into our surroundings. I pray that these candles will provide a special environment for us to connect with our Heavenly Parent."

- Extinguish the flame between two of your fingers or a candlelight snuffer, not by blowing it out with your mouth.
- Now for the Pledge, you do not have to recite it and carry out this part, but just share its purpose by saying the information below:
 - Pledge:
 "The Pledge is 8 verses, written by our True Parents, that expresses the blessings, mission, and responsibilities of the family. It is a way to keep aligned with our goal and vision for our life in order to be children and families that God can be proud of. Pledge can be held and recited anywhere, but is mainly expressed at home. Here's what we do during Pledge:
 - First, set up a pledge table with a Holy Candle and picture of True Parents.
 - Then, light the Holy Candle with Holy Matches.
 - Offer a kyungbae, or a bow, to God and True Parents.
 - Read the Family Pledge verses.
 - Say a prayer. In a more formal manner, you can then have a 7 minute prayer ending with the song "Tongil," which is our faith's song about unity.
 - Extinguish the flame of the Holy Candle with your two fingers or with a candle snuffer.

After this session, hand out goodie bags that contain holy salt, a holy candle, and a copy of the Pledge to each participant. Then, hand out a picture of True Parents to each of them and express how God and True Parents can be with them through this picture. It can serve as a reminder of the people we want to be and a tool to connect with True Parents.

6:00 PM Dinner

7:00 PM Being a Person of Integrity

Have parents or youth leaders give short talks or testimonies on the following topics. Their talks should either focus on why they personally uphold the Unificationist standard regarding the following areas below or should focus on the benefits of keeping a standard of integrity regarding these areas.

If you don't have people in your community who can share on these topics, you can try using a service like Skype to feature people from other communities.

Drugs and Alcohol

Brother/Sister Relationships

Internet Safety/Porn

You can optionally end with a panel made up of the testimony givers and Il Shim leaders. The youth can anonymously submit questions by writing them on a piece of paper and putting them in a container.

9:30 PM Closing

End the evening on a high note with some uplifting songs, a group hug, encouraging words about supporting each other as brothers and sisters, and time for prayer.

Day 2: Preparing for the 2nd Blessing and 3rd Blessing

7:00 AM Morning Exercises

Prepare some stretches and exercises to get everyone's blood pumping to start the day. Make sure to make it fun and exciting! You can add upbeat music in the background to bring some energy.

7:30 AM Hoon Dok Hae

Read from the Cheon Seong Gyeong, Book 8, Chapter 1, Section 1: A Life of Faith (starting on page 793).

8:00 AM Breakfast

9:00 AM Matching and Blessing Testimonies

1. Sing songs to prepare the atmosphere.
2. Prepare 3 couples to offer 10 minute testimonies about their matching and blessing experience. It's a good idea to feature couples with different experiences such as a young couple that was matched by their parents, a young couple that was matched by True Parents and an older experienced couple.
3. Testimonies should focus on: preparation during middle and high school for the matching and blessing, personal story of the matching and blessing, and insights on the value of the matching and blessing.
4. After each testimony, the couple can ask if anyone has questions for them.
5. Optional: Have participants get into small groups and share highlights/questions/thoughts that came to them during the testimonies.

10:30 AM Personal Mission Statement Building

1. Explain that in life, growth is bound to happen when you set goals for yourself. A mission statement says who you are, what your goals are, and what you value. Show them the following examples:
 - a. *"My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style" -- Maya Angelou*
 - b. *"To serve as a leader, live a balanced life, and apply ethical principles to make a significant difference" -- Denise Morrison, Campbell Soup Company*
2. Say that they will fill out a sheet that will help them to break down and define exactly what their mission statement is.

Have the youth fill out this worksheet:

static1.squarespace.com/static/5ac28630372b960225ef6818/t/5adf737503ce643ebcbc84ef/1524593529452/seven-habits-the-great-discovery.pdf

3. Once they have finished the worksheets, have the youth share their mission statements in small groups. It's ok if they aren't able to completely finish their mission statement, but encourage them to at least share the direction they are heading.

12:00 PM Lunch with Parents

Invite the parents ahead of time to attend lunch and the final session with their children during the retreat. This is a great opportunity to re-emphasize the importance of the parent and child relationship. You can leave the printed Lunch with Parents discussion questions on each table to encourage good communication during lunch as well.

***If a participant's parents cannot attend, invite them to have lunch with you instead!*

1:00 PM Homework: Review and Assign

Review Last Week's Homework:

1. Share the answers to these questions. Depending on the size of your group you can share as one group, pair share, or share in small groups. You just want to be careful about your time, so choose the format that is best for your group.
 - a. Who are True Parents to you?
 - b. What do you admire most about them?
 - c. What did they teach you that changed your perspective on life?

***If a participant's parents are not Unificationist, they had to*

share what they learned about True Parents to their parents.

They should share about how that discussion went.

2. Go over the answers to these questions regarding the DP Lecture they watched this week. Keep in mind that the youth may have a variety of answers. It may be a good idea to address these answers in a discussion format with you making the concluding points so everyone is on the same page.
 - a. How come the Messiah came and was killed if that wasn't God's original intention?
 - b. What are the barriers to us recognizing the Messiah?
 - c. What was John the Baptist's role in welcoming Jesus?
3. Check in about the 24-hour fast. You can ask things like:
 - a. What purpose did you choose for your fast?
 - b. How did it go?

Assign Homework for this Week:

1. Before Il Shim is completed, you will need to complete three hours of service internship work with your local church by graduation. Your homework for this

week is to choose your area for internship and make a plan for how and when you will complete three hours of service.

- a. Invite your Pastor to come and spend time with the youth and explain some options for them to get involved in the local community. Some ideas could be: Sunday School, Youth Ministry, Music Ministry etc. He/she can share about this during this time. (You will need to check in with the youth before graduation to make sure they have completed this work.)
2. Design a display for the family mission statement we are making later today and put it up somewhere in your house.

3:00 PM Family Session: Family Mission Statement

1. Give this list of questions to each family and have them discuss **a few** of these questions to help them start their family mission statement. The parents/families can choose which questions to use. (If someone's parents were not able to attend, complete this with them, and guide them on creating the statement).
 - What is the purpose of our family?
 - What kind of feeling do we want to have in our home?
 - How do we want to treat one another and speak to one another?
 - What things are truly important to us as a family?
 - What are our responsibilities as family members?
 - How can we contribute to society as a family and become more service-oriented?
 - (These questions are taken from an article written by Brett and Kate McKay called "Creating a Positive Family Culture: How and Why to Create a Family Mission Statement. You can read the article here: www.artofmanliness.com/2013/08/21/creating-a-family-culture-how-and-why-to-create-a-family-mission-statement/)
2. After discussing for 15-20 minutes, have the families create their mission statement. The families should have freedom to make the mission statement as they please, either a short phrase or a short paragraph. Here's a quote from Stephen Covey on what a family mission statement is, "A family mission statement is a combined, unified expression from all family members of what your family is all about --- what it is you really want to do and be --- and the principles you choose to govern your family life."
3. Have each family read their mission statement aloud

4:00 PM Closing and Farewell

Thank everyone for coming and offer a closing prayer for the retreat.

Session 7: I'm Worth Waiting For

Supplies for this session: 2 random objects, 4 cups labeled: Effects on You, Effects on Your View of the Opposite Sex, Effects On Your Future Marriage, and Effects on Society, Effects of Porn paper slips - cut, print out of Effects of Porn Answer Key, laptop/projector to show video, Ted Talk Quotes printed out, tape.

1. Welcome and Check In (5 minutes)

- Welcome everyone to their seventh session!
- Introduce what the session will be about:
 - The impact of The Fall on our society
 - The value of purity
 - Difficulties we face in living a pure lifestyle
- Share what they can gain from their investment into the session:
 - An understanding of why our world is the way it is because of The Fall
 - A better grasp on why we practice purity
 - Some tips and tools to living a pure lifestyle

2. Play an Icebreaker (10 minutes)

3. Group Juggling

- Have everyone stand in a circle and stretch out their arms with fingers touching so that they are not too close.
- Explain that you will be tossing an object to an individual while saying their name.
- The person who catches the object tosses it to someone else, saying the receiver's name.
- Remind them to pay close attention so that they know names of people are ready to toss the object when they receive it.
- Use a ball, stuffed animal, or other soft object for tossing.
- To make it more challenging, start throwing in other objects at the same time.

4. Review Homework from Last Week (10 minutes)

- Share what area of church internship they chose and how they are going to complete their 3 hours before the completion of Il Shim.
- Share how they designed their family mission statement and where they displayed it in their home.

5. Read the Session Reading (10 minutes)

- Read through the "Session 7: I'm Worth Waiting For"
- This reading can be a bit uncomfortable, or awkward, to read in just partners. So it may be a better idea to read altogether if you're in a small group, or split them into 2 groups. Take turns reading aloud, and stop at the end of each section to discuss and have them highlight one or two main thoughts.

6. Discussion: (20 minutes)

- Say, "we're going to watch a TED Talk on a woman who, growing up, was told not to date until marriage by her strict Nigerian parents. At first, she didn't want to wait and dreamed of her first time with someone being fancy, with candles and rose petals. However, she began to learn that the vision of what she wanted wouldn't be found by a young high schooler or college student who didn't even know who he was yet or what he wanted in life. She decided to wait for the right person for her, saying 'The wait is sexy' and lays out 5 things that are worth waiting for."
- Show video, **starting at the 7:04** min mark.
 - www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zw7AXwnb8M
- After the video, have 3 Ted Talk Quotes sheets taped on the walls in separate parts of the room. Each one should have the following quotes from the video:
 - "Wait on purpose and not in fear."
 - "You have to know your own standards, and you have to set them for yourself."
 - "I don't get mad if somebody doesn't like me for me, they are just not the one for me."
- Give some time for participants to walk to each quote. Have them write the quote in their II Shim notebooks and what each one means to them.
- After everyone's finished, have them turn to a partner and share each quote meant to them.

1. Personal Reflection Points (7 minutes)

2. Allow some quiet time for the youth to write and/or think about these questions in their II Shim notebooks. Feel free to play some quiet and reflective music in the background.
 - What tips do you use, or want to use, to keep yourself accountable in terms of living a pure life?
 - Why do you feel waiting to have a romantic relationship until marriage is important?
 - What activities, adventures, and experiences do you want to invest your time in now instead of spending your time dealing with crushes, dating and/or temptation/pornography?

3. Activity: Identifying the Effects of Porn (10 minutes)

- Take the 4 cups labeled Effects on You, Effects on Your View of the Opposite Sex, Effects On Your Future Marriage, and Effects on Society.
- Mix up and evenly hand out the cut Effects strips to each person.
- Say, "Puremind.online is a great website that is connected with our faith's High Noon program. This program is working to battle and end society's pornography epidemic. We read that porn is something many youth face, especially with such easy access using the internet. This habit will often continue into adulthood. It can be satisfying and provide pleasure, but only for an instant, which can make this an addiction for many people. We're going to identify the different effects that come with the porn addiction. You

were each given a few of the effects that it can have, and you're going to decide into which cup category it falls under."

- Have each participant read one of their given paper slips and think which cup it goes into. If correct, they can place it in the cup. If not, have them try again and tell them where it really goes. Use your given list to know the answers.
- After, have a quick closing, asking them what their thoughts were on hearing about the many effects porn can have.
- Tell them that if any of them are struggling with this, or would like to talk more about it, they can meet with you anytime. Porn is hard for young people to talk about, and may need a private, yet inviting space to do so. Try your best to provide that and the opportunity to talk for them if needed.

4. This Week's Homework: (5 minutes)

- Fill out the "My Plans for My Internet" form in your packet and go over your answers with your parents.
- Write 2-3 paragraphs in response to the prompt, "The Kind of Husband/Wife I want to be."
- Read from the Cheon Seong Gyeong Book 1, Chapter 4, Section 1: The Parent whose position was usurped (pages 98-100). At the end of each paragraph share a summary with your parents about the meaning of that section.
- Here are some optional resources to learn more about the impact of pornography on your mind and body:
 - www.fightthenewdrug.org
 - www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bb1hkljcSJQ
 - www.youtube.com/watch?v=flh8gnC6J1s

5. Closing Prayer (3 minutes)

6. Offer a closing prayer focusing on surrounding ourselves with a good environment so that we can nurture our purity and prepare for our future blessings and marriages.

Session 7 Reading: I'm Worth Waiting For

In Session 2, we learned when God created us He/She envisioned each of us building lives of love, joy, and fulfillment. We also learned that God invested His/Her entire self into creation with the hope that it would become a world full of happy families living in happy communities. And yet, when we look at the world around us, we see that it is far from God's hope. We can't help but ask ourselves, what happened? How did the world stray so far from God's ideal? The answer to that can be found by looking at the story of our first human ancestors: Adam and Eve.

What Really Happened in The Fall?

You've probably heard the story of the Human Fall a few times before, which is told in the beginning of the Bible. However, let's break it down. After creating Adam and Eve, God shared with them all the wonderful things that they had in store for their lives. God expressed His/Her excitement over being able to experience their lives through them. God also asked them to wait to have a romantic relationship until they were mature people and could receive God's blessing. As time went on, however, the Bible states that a serpent tempted Eve to fall, from which Eve then tempted Adam (*Genesis 3*). The Divine Principle explains how since this serpent has the ability to talk, especially to spiritual beings such as Adam and Eve, it must be a symbol for a spiritual being. This serpent was none other than the angel Lucifer.

Lucifer was one of the top angels who was ranked highly, was entrusted by God, and was allowed in the Garden of Eden (*Ezekiel 28:13*). However, after Adam and Eve were created, he began to turn when he saw the love and attention they were receiving from God. He felt he deserved the same, if not more. The Bible states that Adam and Eve were tempted by Lucifer to eat from the "fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden." Most people believe that this was a real fruit, but the Divine Principle questions how God would put something so simple as a fruit to be attractive and appealing enough to cause the Fall. In addition, Adam and Eve "ate from the fruit" and suddenly felt naked and sewed fig leaves like aprons to cover their parts (*Genesis 3*). Jude 6-7 compares the falling of angels to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, who "gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion." The Divine Principles makes the connection that Lucifer must have tempted Eve (who later tempted Adam) to fall through a sexual act, which is why they felt naked after.

Eve suddenly felt ashamed of her actions and, realizing that God created her to be with Adam, turned to Adam for love, comfort, and an attempt to be who she was before her mistakes with Lucifer. However, Adam also gave into her temptation, and they both fell together. Because sin is passed down through lineage and children, their sin was passed down to their children, which multiplied into today's society.

// Section Recap: The Divine Principle and the Bible both show proof of how Lucifer wanted more, and tempted Eve to walk away from God's plan by diving into a sexual relationship

prematurely - before receiving God's blessing. Eve turned to Adam, unknowingly convincing him to Fall as well. Their sins and mistakes evidently were passed down to today's society.

The Process to Maturity

God told Adam and Eve the consequences of "eating the fruit" before they were mature, so why is it that they could make such a mistake? The Divine Principle teaches us that the power of love is stronger than the power of the Principle (or in this case, God's commandment). God designed the world this way so that we could freely choose to love in a mature, Godly way. If the power of the Principle were stronger than love, we would consider following the rules and principles as more important than loving others. We would put studying scripture above freely loving God as our Heavenly Parent. Instead of this, God made love the most powerful force of the universe so that we could lead dynamic and meaningful lives with Him/Her at the center, despite the chance that this freedom and choice to love could cause us to fall.

While this is a great blessing, the time in our lives in which we are growing towards maturity can be difficult. We call this time the *period of indirect dominion*. In order to go through this time period, we will need to follow God's principles so that we can reach the *period of direct dominion* in which our desires and God's desires become one - to freely live and love in maturity.

This is why God asked Adam and Eve to wait for their marriage until they were mature. If we don't wait until we are mature enough, we end up with hurt hearts or hurting others because we weren't ready to fully love and care for someone else. When we talk about saving ourselves for marriage, we're talking about more than just having sex. Our faith teaches us that we are both physical and spiritual beings. So that means there is both a physical and spiritual aspect of purity and that means that purity has many aspects and levels to it.

// Section Recap: God made love more powerful than His/Her principles, despite knowing that his children could potentially fall from this freedom. We need to take time during the period of indirect dominion to work on ourselves to become mature people, who are able to follow God's principles. When ready and mature, we can then look towards caring for another person through marriage.

Caring For Our Spiritual Purity

The spiritual aspect of our purity has to do with what we allow our spirit to interact with. This includes what you surround yourself with - the types of movies and T.V. shows you watch, the types of books you read, and the types of music you listen to. It also includes making important decisions regarding pornography.

Pornography includes materials that displays vivid sexual activity and include pictures, videos and even books. Because pornography is so easy to access online, you will probably be exposed to it in the near future if you haven't already been. But it's important to know the whole story about pornography. There's a whole science about the negative impact of pornography on your brain and your ability to have meaningful, romantic relationships in the future. It can also distort your image of what true love is, what sex is, and how you will view your future spouse. All of the research surrounding pornography says the same thing; it is not healthy for you or your future marriage.

// Section Recap: You improve your spirit by surrounding it with healthy things. Certain habits, such as porn, can become an addiction that can negatively impact your spirit, your life, and eventually seep into your future marriage and family.

Making the Choice to Work on "Me" First

Nurturing our purity on both of the spiritual and physical planes is the reason we, as Unificationists, choose not to date. It may be hard to explain to your friends why you don't date when they may already have boyfriends and girlfriends. We choose not to date because we want to give our whole heart, soul, and body to our future spouse. If we were to have other romantic relationships before marriage, then when we eventually get married, we will be bringing our full selves into that marriage - including our memories, emotions, and experiences from our past relationships. Instead, we want to be able to share every "first" with our spouse and begin our journey of love on a clean slate. True Parents have taught us that it is only through our spouse that we are able to understand God and understand all people of the opposite gender.

The awesome part of working on yourself while you are in this stage of your life is that it gives you the freedom to focus on the things that make **you** happy, and improve the skills and talents that you have! This is the time for you to build your future and think about what kind of life you want to live. This is your time to have adventures, discover yourself and the world around you, and become the person you want to be. Choosing to save romantic relationships for when you are mature and ready to love and care for someone else means you have the freedom to live your life to the fullest! So enjoy it, because God certainly wants to enjoy your life with you. One day, you'll find someone with the same values as you, get engaged through the Unification matching ceremony, and receive the Marriage Blessing - experiencing marriage the way God intended it to be. But in the meantime, it's important to continue to be invested in your purity so that you can be the best future husband or wife for your spouse.

Here are a few tips and tools to help you in maintaining a purity-based lifestyle and becoming a mature person:

- Choose your music, movies, and T.V. shows well

- Tell your parents, or a respected Unificationist, when you have feelings for someone of the opposite gender
- Hang out with friends of different genders in groups, instead of one-on-one
- Let your friends know where you stand in terms of dating and purity

The most important tip having an abstinent lifestyle is to fill your time with activities and experiences that you love. That way you can focus on being the best version of you!

// Section Recap: We view the purity-based lifestyle as a **choice** - a choice that we want to choose because we know it'll lead to a bigger and brighter future. Now is the time when we work on improving ourselves and fixing our bad habits. Then, when the time comes to look into a committed, long-lasting relationship with someone else, we are able to bring in less baggage and more possibilities for joy.

Session 8: The Greatest Blessing

Supplies for this session: pens, paper, highlighters, optional blindfold for ice breaker, laptop/projector for video, Il Shim notebooks

1. Welcome and Check In (5 minutes)

- Welcome everyone to their eighth session!
- Introduce what the session will be about:
 - The value of Marriage
 - The value of The Blessing
 - Your Path towards the Blessing
- Share what they can gain from their investment into the session:
 - An understanding of the benefits of committing to marriage.
 - A clearer perspective on why the Blessing is different from marriage.
 - Some ideas for what steps to take when you feel ready to begin your future Matching process.

2. Play an Icebreaker (10 minutes)

You have two options to choose, based on what you feel is better for your group size.

Don't Make Eye Contact

- Have everyone stand in a large circle, close their eyes, and face their head towards the floor.
- Count "1, 2, 3, Look" and when you say "Look" everyone should look up and look at someone's eyes in the circle.
- If two people make eye contact, they are out of the game.
 - Some people like to have dramatic death scenes to symbolize their leaving the game.
- Make the circle smaller each time someone leaves the game.
- Continue this process until there is 1-2 people, who are the winners of the game.

Blind Pictionary

- Split into two groups (this can even be done with just one group).
- One person will start blindfolded in each group. Whisper to them something they have to draw (here are some options: a pig, an iphone, an apple tree, a man running, a sandwich, a spider, skateboarder, baseball).
- They have to draw their given word blindly while everyone else guesses what it is. Whoever guesses it correctly, will be blindfolded next.
- Play a few rounds.

3. Review Homework from Last Week (10 minutes)

- Check in on how the youth are doing regarding their 3 hours of service internship with your local church community.
- Confirm that everyone filled out the "My Plans for the Internet" form and went over it with their parents.
- Have the youth share their paragraphs on "The Kind of Husband/Wife I want to be" in partners or small groups.
- Reiterate the main point of the Hon Dok Hae: God was meant to be our Parent, but instead His/Her heart was broken as a result of the Fall.

4. Read the Session Reading (20 minutes)

- Read through the "Session 8 Reading."
- Sit in a circle and "popcorn" read (someone reads, then picks the next person to read, and so on.)
- Discuss each section together and have them highlight one or two things that stood out to them before moving onto the next section.

5. Discussion: (15 minutes)

6. Have students form two circles, one inside and one outside. Each person on the inside should be paired with a person on the outside, facing each other. Say aloud each of these questions, one at a time, for the pairs to discuss. Before going to the next question, have the outside circle rotate one seat so that everyone gets a new person to discuss with.
- In your opinion, what makes The Blessing so special/unique?
 - When do you think a person is ready to start a relationship through the matching?
 - What do you admire about your parent's blessing/marriage?

Option: If you do not have enough people to do this, you can simply form small groups or discuss as a whole.

7. Activity: Am I What I'm Looking For? (10 minutes)

- Ask everyone to write down, in their notebooks, 10 qualities or aspects of a person that they would be looking for in a future spouse.
- Share those lists in small groups or partners
- Show video from **22:45 to 24:54**
 - www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zi5OeujeW2E&list=PLrRRQeaYyVOx9eE5WqoLuQiPxbtr3TOC0andindex=3
- Summarize the idea that we need to check and grow ourselves before we think about our dream partner.
- Now ask everyone to look back at their list and ask themselves, "Do I have these qualities?" Have them circle which qualities they believe they have, and then write down 3 aspects of themselves they need to work on.

8. Personal Reflection Points (7 minutes)

9. Allow some quiet time for the youth to write and/or think about these questions in their Il Shim notebooks. Feel free to play some quiet and reflective music in the background.

- Is there a married couple in your church community, or elsewhere, that you admire? What do you admire about their relationship?
- How do you think the Blessing can be an important step in your future?
- What do you hope your future marriage will look like? What kind of relationship do you envision for yourself?

10. This Week's Homework: (5 minutes)

- Continue completing your 3 hours of service internship with your local community.
- Complete a 7 Day prayer condition with your parents this week. Focus on the 4 points of the Il Shim Pledge:
 - I promise to make sincere effort to develop my relationship with God and my life of faith through prayer and through my lifestyle.
 - I will strive to inherit the Unificationist traditions of honoring True Parents, upholding the value of the Blessing by maintaining my sexual purity until the Blessing, and living for the sake of others.
 - I commit to the process of growing and deepening my relationship with my parents by practicing healthy and open communication.
 - I will endeavor to find ways to serve my local church community and wider society with my unique passions and talents.These things I pledge before God, True Parents, my parents, and my community.
- Complete the 10-Year Vision Worksheet in your packet.

11. Closing Prayer (3 minutes)

12. Offer a closing prayer focusing on preparing ourselves for a fulfilling and happy future Blessing.

Session 8 Reading: The Greatest Blessing

Today's culture is all about getting what you want instantly - especially with relationships. Society is glamorizing the hook-up culture, but what benefits does that offer for you in the long term? Not many. However, research has shown that married people experience less depression, less poverty, and better health¹. Married people have also shown to be happier, experience longer lives, build more wealth, and have children who show greater academic success, are less vulnerable to emotional illness, and are more likely to have positive attitudes towards forming lasting marriages². There are endless benefits for you! However, the beauty of Unificationism is that it takes marriage a step further with the understanding that successful marriages not only benefit ourselves, but society and the world.

Why Choose the Marriage Blessing?

As Unificationists, we believe that marriage is an essential part of God's plan and our path towards becoming the best versions of ourselves. However, we see that marriage in today's society has lost some of its spiritual value and significance as a result of the Fall. That is why we cherish the Marriage Blessing. The Marriage Blessing is the greatest blessing you can receive because it's the first time in history that God has been able to give His/Her Blessing to married couples! If Adam and Eve had not fallen and instead become mature before having a romantic relationship, they would have experienced their Blessing ceremony with God. However, Adam and Eve fell and all of their descendants have been unable to receive God's Blessing. Furthermore, the mistakes they made and issues they weren't able to resolve were continually passed down from generation to generation. That's why True Parents, Rev. and Mrs. Moon, have focused much of their efforts on the Marriage Blessing. Because of the work and foundation that they have made, God is finally able to give His/Her Blessing to humankind and see true, God-centered marriages and families develop.

// Section Recap: We're lucky to live during the time of True Parents because this the first time ever where God was able to bless our marriages. This is the first time we have been able to latch ourselves onto God's lineage and start anew with His/Her true vision.

Re-Rooting Ourselves Back to God

The ultimate purpose of the Marriage Blessing is to build a foundation for a God-centered, happy, and peaceful family. While there are many good families in the world, marriage doesn't always produce a strong family. We know that DNA gets passed down from parent to child, but along with DNA, other

¹ www.familyfacts.org/briefs/1/the-benefits-of-marriage

² www.foryourmarriage.org/blogs/social-benefits-marriage/

things, such as destructive habits and unresolved issues, unfortunately, get passed down as well. A person can question why they get angry so easily, and then see that their mother gets angry easily as well.

Ever since the Fall, we inherited bad habits and sin that have spread into our families, society, and culture. True Parents have seen and taught that since the family is the school of love, peaceful families can help bring about a peaceful world. They began the Marriage Blessing so that we can be connected back to God's lineage - God's family - and pledge to build relationships rooted in love that reflects His/Her values. However, the beauty of the blessing is that it is meant for everyone! All races, cultures, and faiths are invited and encouraged to dedicate their marriage to God.

During the Marriage Blessing ceremony, couples drink Holy Wine and are sprinkled with Holy Water to symbolize the break from Satan's lineage and the recreation of roots back into God's family - to God's lineage. Children who are born from couples who received the Blessing are called *blessed children*, because they are now created new into God's lineage. Through the Blessing, every person is able to give birth to blessed children and raise a family with God's values and standards.

When we look at the world today, we can see that many romantic relationships end with break ups, hurt, and pain. But God's original plan for the Marriage Blessing was that it is the place in which a man and a woman can inherit and carry out the love of God. God exists with what we call *dual characteristics*, masculinity and femininity, and so the union of a man and woman represents God in His/Her entirety. Getting Blessed is a statement that says we will love as God intended and create a family that helps to create a peaceful and better world.

// Section Recap: We inherit so many things from our parents - both good and bad. If we do not work on fixing our bad habits and issues, we will eventually bring that into our marriage and pass that onto our children. Focusing on our own personal growth before the Marriage Blessing is critical to your success with your future spouse. The Marriage Blessing is a time to vow that we will work towards loving others and building a family as God originally intended.

Growing with Our Future Spouse

Being in a Blessed Marriage gives you the opportunity to grow into a more well-rounded and loving person. Through the ups and downs of a Blessed Marriage, you learn to love your spouse unconditionally and see them from God's point of view. You will help your spouse grow further and change positively through your relationship. But even more importantly, you will find opportunities to challenge and grow your own character. That's the beauty of a Blessed Marriage - that you and your spouse will grow your character together and your ability to love one another. Throughout your marriage, you will create new memories with one another, share joy together, and give each other strength and comfort during difficulties. True Parents have taught us that over time, you will become

like one body - each spouse representing a foot of one body. And together, you will leave footprints of love for humanity and for God.

// Section Recap: A Blessed Marriage is a great opportunity to not only love and be loved by someone special, but also allows you, and your future spouse, to help each other grow into better people. You'll have someone to lean on, find comfort in, and experience new things with.

About the Process

Right now, you are still at an age where you should be working on molding yourself into the best version of you. Take this time of your life to figure out how you can grow and improve yourself so that when ready, you'll be able to offer so many amazing qualities to someone else. So, what is the next step when you actually want to start making that commitment?

The Matching process is an intentional, family-driven engagement process that generally takes place prior to the Blessing³. This is when individuals mentally and spiritually prepare for and find their future spouse. Focusing on including God and your family, you can connect with other individuals who are looking to make the same commitment as well. Once you have taken time to really get to know this person and you and your family feel it is right, you can then get *matched*, or engaged. Then, as an engaged couple, you both work together to prepare for the Blessing.

Thinking about this whole process can be a bit daunting. However, it will be some time from now before you feel ready to begin this process. But the key thing to remember is that the first step is to stay connected to your parents. They are the ones who will help guide you in creating the right process for you. If you have trouble communicating with your parents about this important topic, you can also talk to another elder figure in your community who can act as a mediator and support you and your parents during this process.

Here are some general tips and information to keep in mind regarding your future Matching and Blessing Process:

- If you have feelings about a friend who you think might be a good candidate for your future Matching and Blessing, tell your parents about it.
- If you have concerns about the matching process, talk with your parents and decide how you can work together to make both of you feel more comfortable throughout the experience.
- The matching process can take a significant amount of time. Make sure you go into the process for the long term result, and not the short term payoff.
- There are many resources available to you and your parents at bfm.familyfed.org

³ bfm.familyfed.org/matching/the-matching-process/

The Matching and Blessing may seem like a long ways a way, but remember that the process begins now. This is your time to work on your relationship with God, your family, and become the kind of future spouse you want to be!

// Section Recap: Your future spouse will be the person that you continue to grow, love, and enjoy life with. It is a big step to take, and can be quite scary, but communication with your parents is the key to making sure that the process goes smoothly and successfully.

Session 9: Plugging In

Supplies for this session: paper and pens, highlighters, Il Shim notebooks

1. Welcome and Check In (5 minutes)

- Welcome everyone to their ninth and final session! Next week is graduation!
- Introduce what the session will be about:
 - Serving and living for the sake of others
 - Finding ways to serve that inspire you
 - Our role in the future of our church
- Share what they can gain from their investment into the session:
 - A deeper understanding of the value of service
 - Insight on areas of service that might be meaningful for you
 - Perspective on your role in the future of our community

2. Warm Up for Today's Session (10 minutes)

3. Instead of an icebreaker this week, use this time to let the youth share about the completion of their 3 hours of internship with their local community. Have them stand in front of the group and share on these three points:
 - What ministry area did you work with and how did you spend your time in service?
 - What did you learn and what skills did you gain?
 - How do you personally benefit from this experience?

To encourage each person with their sharing, you can do a group chant for them! An example can be: "Look atchu and what you got!" *clap* *clap* "Huh!" or "Ayyeeeee We're lovin what you just shared ayyeeeee!"

4. Review Homework from Last Week (10 minutes)

- Check in on the completion of the 3 hours of service internship with your local community.
- Confirm that the youth have completed their 7 day prayer condition.
- Have the youth share their 10 year vision with the group.

5. Read the Session Reading (10 minutes)

- Read through the "Session 10 Reading."
- Have the participants lead the reading. Have them "popcorn" read (one person starts, then picks another person to read, and so on). After each person reads, they will share a thought or insight they had from the reading, and will share what they feel should be highlighted.

6. Discussion: (15 minutes)

7. Have students walk around the room aimlessly. When you say "Partner up!" they will partner with the person closest to them. Read aloud the first discussion question and give a couple

minutes for them to each share. Then, have them walk around again and repeat the process for the rest of the discussion questions.

- Share an experience in which you felt like you benefited from giving of your time for someone or something else.
 - If you haven't had that experience yet, share how you think you might benefit from giving of your time for a greater cause.
- What area of ministry would you like to get involved in? If you are unsure, what gifts do you have that you think you can give back to your community?
- What kind of church community would you like to have for you and your future family?

8. Activity: (10 minutes) Fuzzy Wuzzies with a Twist

- Get everyone to sit in a circle at either a table, or make sure they have something flat to write on.
- Have each person write their name on the top of a paper and pass the paper the right.
- Give each person 1 minute (timed) to write something nice about that person whose name is on the paper. They should write a short message on the paper they received which highlights that person's best qualities, talents and skills.
- After the minute, say, "Switch!" and then everyone will pass the paper to the right again. Time a minute again as each person writes. Repeat until everyone gets their paper back.
- Allow a few minutes for everyone to read the messages, soak up the love, and see how special they really are.

9. Personal Reflection Points (7 minutes)

10. Allow some quiet time for the youth to write and/or think about these questions in their Il Shim notebooks. Feel free to play some quiet and reflective music in the background.
- How can you make service a part of your regular life?
 - What area of ministry could you see yourself contributing to in your adult life?
 - What kind of relationship and/or involvement would you like your future family to have with the church community?

11. This Week's Homework: (5 minutes)

- Go over the schedule and attire of the graduation so the youth will know how to prepare.
 - Encourage them to dress semi-formally.
 - Girls can wear dresses, skirts, or nice pants with a blouse.
 - Boys can wear a suit or collared shirt with dress pants.
- Complete 3 hours of service internship with your local community if you haven't already.
- Write a 3-5 sentence blurb about what area of church ministry inspires you that will be used in the Il Shim Graduation program. Give them your email or contact info so that

they can send you their written blurbs. Make sure the youth complete this homework today so that you can use it to prepare the program.

- Write a personal pledge to your parents or guardian that will be read during the graduation. The whole class will read the Il Shim pledge together, but the personal pledge will be read to your parents/guardian during the ring ceremony. Your personal pledge should have 3-5 points, and should reflect the type of commitment you want to make to your parents/guardian from now on.

12. Closing Prayer (3 minutes)

13. Offer a closing prayer focusing on finding ways to serve that us and taking ownership over the future of our local church.

Session 9 Reading: Plugging In

There's a common concept in our society that teaches us if you give your time, energy, money, and resources to others, you will end up with less than what you started with. But if we all lived that way, what kind of a world would we be living in? Do we really want to live in a place where people focus only on their own needs and don't take care of others? That kind of world is not the one God designed for us, and it doesn't benefit us as a whole either. So there must be something false about this concept. The Divine Principle teaches us that the universe was designed with the spiritual law of *give and take action*. What this means is that God created the universe with the law that you get something in return when you give to others. Simply put, if you give to others, you will receive from others. God made this a spiritual law, so you can count on the fact that it will never change.

Feeding Your Spirit

So what do you get in return when you give to others? You may very well receive external things such as gifts, money, or acts of kindness. But that's not what the law of give and take action is talking about. When you give to others, you create a spiritual relationship between your soul and the soul of the other person. It's your spirit that is able to reap the biggest benefit from giving to others, and we call this benefit *vitality elements*. Vitality elements are the nourishments that your spirit receives when you give to others. Just like your physical body needs food, air, and water to grow and survive, your spiritual body needs vitality elements that come from serving others. Although vitality elements are a spiritual element, your physical body is able to reap the benefits of them through your spiritual body. There's a special mutual relationship between your spirit body and physical body that allows this to occur. That's why you feel happier and better about yourself after you do a service project, volunteer your time, or go out of your way to help someone. God created the law of give and take action so that you would be happier as a result of giving to others!

Our society tends to promote the importance of achieving personal success in terms of money, status, and lifestyle. It's likely that as a result of growing up in this society, you've been taught to take care of your own needs and look out for yourself first before looking out for others. But one of the cornerstones of the Unificationist faith is that we believe living a life of service is an essential part of becoming an ideal person. We believe that living for other people is the way in which you become a better person. That's because when you put the needs of others before your own, you learn to see from God's viewpoint and to love the world the way God loves the world.

// Section Recap: When you selflessly give to others, you, in turn, provide your spirit with the fuel it needs to grow. Just like our physical body needs food and water, our spirit needs vitality elements, which comes from serving others. When you put others before yourself, you learn to love others as God loves.

Living for the Sake of Others

True Parents have taught us that the way to create true peace and happiness in the world is by *living for the sake of others*. When we live for the sake of others, we receive positive energy and blessings from God. God is ready to support you in your life when you are able to support others first. Additionally, if you are able to think from someone else's point of view and understand their heart, you will have learned to love with true love. This is what we call the *culture of heart*, which is a culture that centers around making decisions based on our love-centered relationship with others. If each person in our world practiced this type of culture, we would have a thriving world of peace and joy.

There are many different ways that you can serve the world and your community. An important part of taking responsibility for your life of faith is finding ways that you can contribute that also inspire you and make you feel fulfilled. Some people may find fulfillment in playing in their church band,, some may find fulfillment in making food for people, others may find it by greeting church-goers at the front door. The point is there is no wrong way to serve and live for others, but it's your job to find the best place for you to plug in and give!

Another way of serving your church community is by tithing. Unificationists are encouraged to offer at least one-tenth of their income as a way of showing God that He/She is more valuable to them than money. God can then see your selflessness, and will want to bless you in return. It can be hard to give our money, because money is a necessary part of our lives. It's the way in which we are able to feed, clothe, and house ourselves and our families. It's not as if God needs money, but we offer our money because it's important to us. In order to make a sincere offering to God, we must offer something that is of high importance to us. It's easy to give small things, but it takes a lot of strength to give our hard-earned money. So even in moments of financial difficulty, it's even more important to continue to tithe so that God can feel your heart and bless you in your situation.

// Section Recap: Today's culture is more focused on the *self*. This is not the culture that God intended. When we care for others, we begin to create a culture of heart. One way to give back to your community is by finding how you can use your talents and passions to improve your church. Another way is by tithing, which shows God that you are able to give one of the most valuable things for something greater.

Building Your Church

At this point in your life, you are still young and are watching other people run your church. However, in 10-15 years, it will become *your church*, and you will have more power and resources to lead it in a positive direction. Someone in your II Shim class may become the Pastor one day. Someone in your II Shim class may become a Sunday School teacher, a Youth Pastor, the church bookkeeper, or the church clean up team. One day you and your peers will be running the church, and that means you will have the ability to make it the kind of place you want to be part of. That process starts now. What kind of church community do you want to raise your future family in? How can you help make that happen now?

You have your own spirit that needs to grow and it's your job to take care of it, just like it's your job to make sure you eat, get exercise, and take care of your physical body. One of the best ways to let your spirit grow consistently is by getting involved in your local church. It can be hard to put yourself out there, but the reward of serving your local community is priceless. You will feel happier, build deep relationships with others, and become a part of creating the community you want to be part of. You bring a unique perspective to your community - one that only you can provide. You are needed in building a better world, and that opportunity can start now!

// Section Recap: You may be young, but soon enough, your church will be *your* church. Now is the time to think about how you can contribute to help create the church environment you'd like to see. Also, when you begin to plug into your community, you will also be able to meet other people and build deeper relationships.

Session 10: Graduation!

Make sure to ask the youth to arrive 1 hour early to graduation so you can go over the program and rehearse their exit. You should save seats for all the participants in the front row, or front few rows. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- **Attire:** This is a big moment for your group of youth, so encourage them to dress semi-formally. Girls can wear dresses, skirts, or nice pants with a blouse. Boys can wear a suit or collared shirt with dress pants.
 - **Decor:** A little decoration goes a long way to make these young people feel special. A few balloons, streamers, and flowers will help solidify the significance of this ceremony.
 - **Program:** In your program you should include the schedule of the program, names and blurbs from all the participants, the Il Shim pledge, the Community pledge, and any acknowledgements for people who helped make Il Shim possible this year. (An editable template and powerpoint for projection are included in the Google Drive).
 - **Photos:** Make sure you have someone to take photos of the ceremony and particularly photos of the parents and youth. Make these photos available to the families after the ceremony is complete.
 - **Refreshments:** Prepare refreshments to offer at the conclusion of the ceremony to encourage fellowship.
1. **Songs:** Sing 3 congregational songs to set the spirit for the graduation. If you have Il Shim participants who are musical, this would be a good opportunity for them to plug in.
 2. **Prayer:** Offer a prayer to start the graduation.
 3. **Message:** Have one of the Il Shim leaders give a 15-minute message on the value of Il Shim and how it will impact the lives of the youth from this point forward.
 4. **Ring Ceremony:**
 5. Depending on the size of your group, you can have however many families come up at a time that will fit on stage. When they are called the parents/guardians and youth should stand in front of the congregation. You may want to have volunteers help arrange the families so that it looks neat.
 - **Parent Vow:** Have the parents read their pre-written vow to their children privately (no microphone).
 - **Youth Vow:** Have the youth read their pre-written vow to their parents privately (no microphone).
 - **Ring Ceremony:** The father's will receive the "true love waits" ring from the pastor with a half bow, then the mother's will receive the ring from their husbands with a half bow, and the child will then receive the ring from their mother with a half bow. If only one

guardian is in attendance, they will receive the ring for the pastor and present it to the child.

- Hugs and Photos: The audience should applaud and photos can be taken of each family.
6. **Participant Pledge:** The youth should return to their seats but remain standing and face the congregation. The MC should lead the youth in reading the Il Shim Pledge in unison.
- *I promise to make sincere effort to develop my relationship with God and my life of faith through prayer and through my lifestyle.*
 - *I will strive to inherit the Unificationist traditions of honoring True Parents, upholding the value of the Blessing by maintaining my sexual purity until the Blessing, and living for the sake of others.*
 - *I commit to the process of growing and deepening my relationship with my parents by practicing healthy and open communication.*
 - *I will endeavor to find ways to serve my local church community and wider society with my unique passions and talents.*
7. **Community Pledge:** The MC should direct the audience to stand up and lead them in reading the community pledge.
- *We promise to be examples of healthy relationships with God, True Parents, and our Families through our daily habits and testimony.*
 - *We will strive to create an atmosphere of love and encouragement as you grow and prepare for your future life as a Blessed Family.*
 - *We commit to making space for you to be involved in our community so that you can express your God-given passions and talents.*
 - *We believe in you, trust you, and are very excited to see the things you will accomplish!*
8. **Prayer:** A closing prayer of blessing should be offered upon the Il Shim graduates.
9. **Mansei:** Explain what *mansei* means - ten thousand years. We shout it out as a cheer to hope for success for many years to come. Then, give three cheers of mansei should be offered.
10. **Recession:** The youth should leave the room together before the congregation does. You can also play graduation music in the background as they leave to signify the importance of this occasion. After exiting the room, it would be a good time to take group photos.
11. **Refreshments:** Allow time for refreshments and fellowship at the conclusion of the ceremony.